

O, Sinners

by Barry Blumenfeld (pen name of Barry Brent)

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About 143,000 words.

for Audrey

Acknowledgements

O, Sinners is a phrase from the lyrics of the song *Down In The Valley To Pray* (traditional), which I encountered in the recording by Alison Krause retitled *Down In The River To Pray* for use in the movie *O Brother Where Art Thou*. Rather than quote a literary version, I chose to make a clunky but close translation of the epigraph. It is the last two sentences of Chapter One, Book One, Part I of *Karamazov*. *Golden Bird* is the title of another song, words and music by Happy Traum, © Roaring Stream Music BMI. The ghosts of a notion or two were drawn from a translation of *The Arabian Nights* by Husain Haddawy, "based on the text of the Fourteenth-Century Syrian Manuscript edited by Muhsin Mahdi". I drew some facts and myths about crows from the Wikipedia article "Crows", <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crow> 1/15/08 and the newspaper article "Crow myths" by Ljubica Gojic, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, www.post-gazette.com/healthscience/20000702crowmythology2.asp 1/15/08. Mike Finley, poet and raconteur, provided the main elements of the tall tale in Chapter 8 over dinner one evening. The spell of attraction in Chapter 8 came from the web page "Spell of Attraction", www.antinopolis.org/pancratesspell.html. Louis Morse's remarks on the Upanishads in Chapter 23 are derived from the web page *Ethics of Hinduism* by Neria Harish Hebbar MD, www.boloji.com/hinduism/032.htm 5/15/08. At the end of Chapter 63, I have stolen a joke in the movie *Harvey* (1950) written by Mary Chase, Oscar Brodney, and Myles Connolly. Mary Chase is the author of the 1944 play. Several friends provided sounding boards and support: Mike Finley, Scott Kamilar, Steve List, Rose Munns, and my wife, Audrey Peham. It is a pleasure also to thank Julie Cox, Randy Kapelke and Char Miller for their attention and feedback. I am grateful past telling to all of them.

Don Juan talked about a little boy that I once knew, and about how my feelings for him would not change with the years or the distance. Don Juan said that he was certain that every time I thought of that little boy my spirit jumped joyfully and without a trace of selfishness or pettiness wished him the best.

He reminded me of a story that I had once told him about the little boy, a story which he had liked and had found to have a profound meaning. During one of our hikes in the mountains around Los Angeles the little boy had got tired of walking, so I had let him ride on my shoulders. A wave of intense happiness engulfed us then and the little boy shouted his thanks to the sun and to the mountains.

"That was his way of saying good-bye to you," don Juan said. I felt a sting of anguish in my throat.

"There are many ways of saying farewell," he said. "The best way is perhaps by holding a particular memory of joyfulness. For instance, if you live like a warrior, the warmth you felt when the little boy rode your shoulders will be fresh and cutting for as long as you live. That is a warrior's way of saying farewell."

Carlos Castaneda
Tales of Power

In most cases people, even villains, are far more naïve and simple-hearted, than we generally believe of them. Yes and we ourselves too.

Dostoevsky
The Brothers Karamazov

My Confessions by Willy Wilson

by Willy Wilson

R. Goodfellow MD, PhD, ed.

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The *Confessions* of Willy Wilson: An Afterword, by Robin Goodfellow MD, PhD

Part Zero

My Prologue

Chapter Minus 1

I point my moral.

I am going to get ahead of the game, which it is to say, I am going to point my moral right now, in stead of at the end. The reason is this. There is no time like the present.

Time is not by the clock, in my opinion. Time is in your thoughts, in that opinion. Here is an example for you. Did you ever think how many people are being born a minute, or how many people are coming to their endings a minute. Your answer is No, I imagine. You have been too busy, I imagine. I am at leisure to consider it, how ever. I can go as slowly as I like, and go over it, and correct the arithmetic, and so on. I have a pad and a pencil. I find it congenial to do it with out I write it down first, how ever. I have some ability in this direction. The way it comes out is, a hundred or so, more or less, go each way every minute. I will not trouble you with the calculations. How do you compass such a question? The way I do it is, I flutter my tongue. I make a sound like, say, a Japanese beetle flying around. A thip thip sound. You can do it slower, or you can do it faster. You can tune it up that way, say, two hundred of those thips a minute. When you have it tuned, it sounds, I should say, like a Japanese beetle. Then, you think about some one getting born, or going the other way, for every one of those thips that your tongue is making on the roof of your mouth. I have carried out this procedure. Here is a thought I had. It is a busy world.

In the land of Amazon, I was busy. I am not so busy as all that where I am now, which it is in this gaol in the land of Arctica, the which in turn has been renamed from Canada, of course, and held in trust for the People of Arctica by our Glorious Nation ever since our Glorious Conquest of those misguided people a few years back. That camp is adjacent to the United States Air Force Missile Facility one point six miles north of the Arctic Circle, of course. All I do here is kitchen duty and keep my nose clean and mind my own business. Kitchen duty is to mop floors and toilets. It is filthy work, of course. I keep my nose clean with frequent showers. I keep the rest of my self clean in like manner. I mind my own business by looking out the bobbed wire on my cell window at the corbies peck seeds in the snow. It is how I have had the leisure I require to find my thoughts. It is all so how I have had an opportunity to consider my terrible misdeeds and so on in the land of Amazon. You might think, Ain't corbies up there. You would be wrong, how ever. It is heating up, up here.

Time is not the same, when you are in it, as it is later on, when you are remembering it. Time seems to go slowly, or it does not seem to go at all. You might be lying on a couch, weeping and weeping in to the smelly old pillow. You might be thinking, This will never end. This will never end. And so on. You might be thinking that, or you might be thinking some thing else. The truth is, you are rushing, as still and as stupefied as you may appear to your self to be at the time. Where are you rushing to, you may ask. Then, I might reply, Time is like a river rapids, rushing you along to when you will while away your days in a prison camp, for an example, or on to ghastly rocks, or down to a whirl pool that sucks you to your fate. It is where you are rushing to. Your down fall and your doom. It is my moral.

Chapter Minus 2

You Do Not Know About Me.

You do not know about me with out you have read a so called master piece of the memoir form, namely, *I Met the Devil*. I have conned it. A line is on the cover, under neath the title. That title is in flame letters under several calumnies on my self, all so, on my beloved person, the late ex-Senator Lula Smith. For I am in the fiery pit, I imagine. Under neath a portrait. Which, it makes me out as the well known thespian Mister Bela Lugosi, when that he was young. Miss Lula, like wise, as the other well known thespian Miss Bette Davis, when she was not so young as all that. Under neath all of this, it writes *by Maxwell Mentirosa* in ice letters. For, when he met me, where we lived was a gaol one point six miles north of the Arctic Circle.

When you read that line you might say, Why, thiseyer master piece was made by Mister Maxwell Mentirosa, the well known repentant person! Lemme drop a coin on thiseyer counter! Lemme read on that devil Wilson, as well as his super natchul beloved person!

How ever, I happen to know that Mister Maxwell Mentirosa did not make the so called master piece. In the cell we were in, when he was bent over his labels that we steamed off soup cans for writing on, there was a ghost all ways crouching on his left shoulder. Whispering this or that in to his ear. It was about the size of a human soul. It was about the color of one, too. It was a ghost writer, of course. I shall not give you further details on it at this time. Thiseyer is not a ghost story (mostly.)

How ever, you might say, Whut size is that soul? I might say, Six inches by six, give one or take one. Whut color? Color of a stormy afternoon. Whut color's that? Never mind. All right, but where's your other number? It is a soul geometry question, soul I might tell you. (Ha ha.) Now listen. A soul is some what broad, and some what long. How ever, it has no thick to it. It is as thin as thin can be, like Peter Pan's shadow. It is a lacy old snood type item, how ever, it is not for your hair. It is for your heart. Well, Willy, you might say. How you know all this? I say, Some one told me. You say, Who? Then I say, Never mind.

I was set up when I found that book *I Met the Devil*, for this reason. Mister Maxwell Mentirosa told several untruths in it. One or two might have been all right. We all make a mistake now and then. An example is this. I am not the devil. I am a plain human. I am not a good one. I give him that, how ever, now he is going around telling his untruths to whom ever will listen. Here is an other one. I do not look like Mister Bela Lugosi. By blood I am Hungarian, I will give him that.

For several years, I did not know Mister Maxwell Mentirosa's master piece. We do not see the news here. Then, I was mopping an office in the north east guard house. That is where they do this and that to you, if, you cheat one of them at cards, or, other wise get on their wrong sides. After that they do those items, some one has to mop up. So, do not cheat at cards up there.

Whiles I was doing my mopping, a lap top, which, they are supposed to lock them, I saw it was unlocked. So I looked my eyes this way, then that way, and found I was alone. I washed up the desk, and the chair, and the lap top. Then, I sat down. Then, I found *I Met the Devil* on Amazon Dot Com. All I had to do was Google my name, and

there it was. Amazon Dot Com is a concern in the land I am from. Namely, the land of Amazon, of course. Which it is north of South Carolina and south of North Carolina. May be that you know it. May be you do not, how ever, I am not going to give you any thing else on it right now.

By the time that I was studying all of Mister Maxwell Mentiroso's untruths, he was not here. His bunk was empty. You could still see the shape of his head in his particular smelly old pillow. His chair next to mine in the gaol cafeteria, where side by side we used to eat the worm filled oat meal from tin bowls and drink the rusty water from tin cups, that chair was empty all so. You could not still see the shape of his hind side in it, how ever.

Mister Maxwell Mentiroso was still here whiles I was writing down my particular stories. They are back asswards. "Why you write the lass part first, Willy? That back asswards." He said it. I did not say why, at that time. Here is my reason, at this time. First things first.

The president is the one who let Mister Maxwell Mentiroso out of here, or, so the rumor has it. It was to go around on the televisions and the radios telling his lies on me, all so, on Miss Lula, who, she was the president's arch rival at that time. After that she was burned for a sorceress, why, then she was no longer her arch rival, of course. The times I said *she* in that sentence that just went by, they mean *the late ex-Senator Lula Smith*. The time I said *her* in the sentence prior to the prior sentence, it means this. *The president*.

The late ex-Senator Lula Smith was my first last and all ways beloved person. In my secreted confessions, I have confessed several sins against her, all so, some other

ones. The tales that Mister Maxwell Mentirosa is letting out these days, I trow, they are a ruse to blacken her name. If, by some chance, you happen to hear Mister Maxwell Mentirosa smirch her on a radio, or on a television, or in a book store, or, if you come up to that fellow sashaying down a sunny street, or a cloudy one or a rainy one, and then, he leans down to you and goggles his red veined eyes at you with his hay mustache crawling around the way it does, and his breath comes on you so your own particular eyes want to roll away some where, and he takes up your lapel in his bony fist, if you are a man, or your sleeve, if you are a woman or a man, or, if he takes you by your purse so you are suspended high over the side walk if you are only a short little woman, for an example, then, if he says to you some such thing as, "The late ex-Senator Lula Smith had God awful carnal knowledge of the Evil One," or some other such thing, then, I hope earnestly this. You will not credit it.

Here is how I should sum this up. Miss Lula Smith and I have met unhappy fates. To suffer calumny. If you were my late beloved person, to expire in your auto da fê, like the beauteous doomed Esmeralda in the well known romance. If you are my self, at the oncoming Thanks Giving mid night to be hauled to the scaffold in your tumbrel, like the noble doomed Charles Darnay in the other romance. At the back door of the Temple of Justice in the City of Gum, which, it is the premier metropolis in the land of Amazon. There to be disrobed in front of some judges, whom, you never even saw them before. After that those judges with their baldy heads and skull caps and mink robes have prayed tearlessly over you a while, through the soke vested in them by our awe some God, to meet at one hour ante meridiem with an Amazon tomahawk. It is an old timey hatchet for Amazon Squirrels. They are small squirrels. There fore, it is a small hatchet. You hand

the fellow a gold piece, or it is wonder full slow work. He will say, "I beg your pardon". Then, you will say, "Why surely". Do not to say any other thing. Do not fall on your knees, or kiss his boots. Do not cry him mercy. He is not listening. Do not thrash this way and that whiles you grind your tongue between your teeth and your boogies come out your nose and you call for your sweet mommy. She is not listening. If you can help your self, do not weep or wail or sob too much at all. It only takes longer that way. Your head to go down in to a bucket of tar, then, up on a pike. I do not know where your other parts go. I do not care particularly. I do not care generally either. Here is a thing I would like to under stand, how ever. Where do your thoughts go? It is a mystery.

Thanks Giving is close. The Amazon Bureau of Investigation is to fly me home in a special air plane. Some one told me, That air plane it has no windows! That may be. It may not be either. I hope it has some. Now I shall tell you on a bumble bee.

Chapter Minus 3

Corporal Lawrence Shaw.

I came to the gaol that I am in, which, it is Minimum Security Federal Prison Camp, in the month June of the year 1982. If you have read the so called master piece, you know by now that it is side by the United States Air Force Missile Facility. That gaol is one point six miles north of the Arctic Circle. You can get to the North Pole in six or seven weeks from there on an eight teen dog dog sledge. Which, it is not a dog dog sledge, but a dog sledge with eight teen dogs on it. You lash your dogs in three files, six dogs a file. I heard his opinion from a hunter up here, that the Alaska Malamute is best for your wheel dogs. It is mighty. For a long haul, two or more each file. Siberian Husky for your leads. It is wicked smart, how ever, do not cross a Siberian Husky. Do not ungently gripe its mouth on the gag line when you do not have to. At times, you have to, unfortunately. Now a swing dog and a point dog, they can be a Malamute or a Mackenzie River Husky if you are short the other kinds. Load rein deer chops, or beef or elk or bear chops, in waxed paper packs, or, packs of other suitable material, on to your sledge. This much. You see lead dogs. You do not see other dogs. They are obscured by the meat. Do not pack wolf chops. They set dogs up. It is best to tie jingle bells on the ropes to cheer up your dogs, on this account. After that they have hauled you a week or so, why, wolf chops, deer chops, or, any other chops, those dogs will be set up. Greased rope lashing lasts longer than deer skin lashing, or elk or moose skin lashing, on this, other, account. The cold. Grease your own skin all over. Bear fat is best. Wolf fat is worst, of course. Most wolves too skinny for it any way.

I have not been to the North Pole. I heard on it from the hunter. He comes up to the bobbed wire. He is not a white person. He is a brown or bronze person, or, he is tanned, perhaps. May be that he has been lying down on a sun tan bed. The sun is awfully weak here. I do not mind. I trust that fellow. He has a pie sort face. His eyes are hood slant and narrow, how ever, I trust him any way. The reason is, I am a liberal. "Willy, you a liberal." Mister Maxwell Mentirosa told me it one time. I shall not give you the reason that, I am a liberal. For this reason. I am staying on my point. "Stay on your point, Willy." He told me that one too. Not the hunter fellow. The other one.

The name of that hunter is Corporal Lawrence Shaw. His other name is Walks A Lot. It is that way in English, how ever, he does not say Walks A Lot in English. He says Corporal Lawrence Shaw in English. Here is what Corporal Lawrence Shaw told me. "Bee sting."

It is what he said after that I said, "Whut is that?" It is how I say *what*.

So I said, "Whut kind bee?" It is what I said after that Corporal Lawrence Shaw said, "Bee sting."

Corporal Lawrence Shaw looked at me as at a fool of some kind, or, if that you are some what skeptical. Which, he tilted his head back. He squinted. He turned the corners down of his lips. It is how you show either one of those sentiments. May be that you have noticed.

"What kind?" he said. He says *what* in the north style, of course. I have under scored that word *kind*.

"I ast you," I said. It is how I say *asked*. I am done with these printed matters. "How would I know?" I said.

Corporal Lawrence Shaw said, "You could be putting me on."

I all most said, Putting you on whut, how ever, that would have been teasing.

"Don't you want to know where I got this fucking thing?" Corporal Lawrence Shaw said.

I said, "From a bee."

He said, "And...?"

I said, "It was in a bee box, which, it got loose?" Only, I smiled, so, Corporal Lawrence Shaw knew that I was putting him on then.

He said, "I'm laughing so much this thing almost don't hurt like a motherfucker, only it fucking does hurt like a motherfucker. No it wasn't in a bee box. What's the fuck a bee box."

"Box of bees," I said. "Comes by mail," I said. "At home," I said.

"You ain't there now," Corporal Lawrence Shaw said.

"Honey bees," I said. "Come with the honey comb," I said. "And the manual," I said.

Corporal Lawrence Shaw started to rub his bruise, then, he stopped. He said, "Shitto motherfucking bastard." His eye was not hood or narrow at that time. It was the shape and size of a plum. I miss plums.

"All right. Where?" I said.

Corporal Lawrence Shaw leaned toward me and put his fingers in the wire. Sentry in a high tower post at the corner of the fence sent a rifle bullet behind him then. It was only a warning. Snow blew up and slug hit a rock on his hind side. Which, it whined and vibrated and flashed in to dust. Not his hind side. The rock. Corporal Lawrence Shaw

pulled his hands out the wire and stepped back. "Fuck you, Mikey," he said. Mikey is that sentry's given name. His sur name is Wilson, just like mine. As far as I know, it does not mean some thing. As far as I know, it is a fated accident. "Mile east," Corporal Lawrence Shaw said. "I was tracking a seal. Could not fucking believe it. Stang like a motherfucker. I clapped my hand on. Which, of course, hurt worse. Then I see it crawling on the snow, woozy like. Asshole sneaking bastard."

"Odd," I said.

He leaned forward. He spied back at Mikey and leaned in an other once. "Wasn't no honey bee," he said. "God damn yellow belly nigger fuck bumble bee," he said.

I said, "I swan!" to gratify him. How ever, a honey bee or a bumble bee were both awe fully odd at this latitude, in my opinion. There was not much to choose, at the time, between the two when it comes to odd, in that opinion. But, not now.

Now, we have bees in side the bobbed wire. Honey bees. Bumble bees. All so, moths. Dagger moths. Tortrix moths. Britannia moths. All so, butter flies. Sleepy Sulphur. Cloudy Wing. All so, flowers. Lilacs. Black eyed Susans. Daisies. Milk weed. Sun flowers and clover flowers. I have not seen an orchid, or a Venus Fly Trap, or a little blush apple flower on an apple tree. An apple flower delights a honey bee, how ever, I have not seen one here. The ice cap is melting. When I was a child, it was a song. Now, it is the weather. Just when I am appointing to leave our world behind, it goes to leaving me behind. It is leaving you too. So, I wish you luck. I have no further use for luck my self.

Part One

I Cross the River

Chapter 1

I am introduced.

The land of Amazon is country in the sunny South, obscure and ensorcelled. It is where I am from. My name is Willy Wilson. I am some one who, among his crowd of follies, is this. I am susceptible to the charms of women. In this connection, I am going to give you some ill deeds I did, mostly in the land of Amazon. Most of them, the sun was not out at the time. Here are the worst ones. They will do to start this. I looked secretly at the body of the enchantress Miss Lula Smith. I looked at her bodily secrets. I looked at them in the night time. An other time, I looked at them in the day time. At yet an other time, it was night time again. Here is an other one. Miss Lula and I dumped, or dropped, or other wise deposited, Miss Isabel Brown, no enchantress she, in to Dammed Lake. That lake is on the north side of Christian Broker's Dam. Miss Isabel was nearly dead at that time. After she went down to the bottom of that lake, she was dead entirely. Those are my worst deeds as far as I know. I am confessing them. So, it is a confession.

When Miss Isabel was floating on Dammed Lake, the moon shined on her eyes. The moon was full. Miss Isabel's eyes were open. They are brown eyes, but Miss Lula has blue eyes. Never the less, Miss Lula has brown eye lashes. They are not among her bodily secrets. They are not secrets at all. I looked on them in secret, how ever.

Why are you going to tell me about it, you may ask. One or two reasons come to my mind. For example, Once a poltroon, ever thus. It is a proverb in the land of Amazon. I am such a poltroon. Your dictionary might say it means coward, if your dictionary was not printed in the land of Amazon, how ever, poltroon does not mean

coward in the land of Amazon. In that land, if it is a low down villain of any sort, it is a poltroon. I am one of those particular poltroons.

Then, there is the need to pick and pick and pick and pick. For example, you get your second rear molar pulled out. You do not get your first rear molar pulled out. You had that particular molar pulled out a long time in the past, so it is your second rear molar's time to go, this time. Your dental surgeon says, Do not pick at the stitches. Of course you say, I will not, Doctor Jones, for this reason. Her name is Doctor Jones. Then the special tooth pulling pain killer she gives you wears off. I am not saying it is a terrible pain in there. It is not much pain at all. But you have a new sensation going on in your mouth. It is the empty hole where your second rear molar used to be. But there is all so a fullness in the emptiness that you can not account for. You want to know what it is. Is it a wad of cotton, or is it a mite of gauze, or is it a ball of wax? You do not necessarily have an idea why there should be a ball of wax in your mouth. The dental surgeon community does not make use of wax balls, to your best knowledge. It is the closest you can come to comparing it, so that is what you wonder. You do not want a ball of wax rolling around in that socket where your second rear molar used to grow, for this reason. When you sleep at night, you sleep on your back from time to time. You lie there with your mouth wide open. There fore, your throat is wide open. Who knows what might go rolling down it at a time of that sort? Who knows what might plug your air way up, much like a boulder in a mine shaft, with all the desperate miners behind it hammering on it with their hammers and their tongs? They want to get out. It is an earnest wish they have. But they can not do it. The boulder is in the way, so they suffocate until they are dead. It is a sorry fate. It is some thing you do not wish for your

self. Hence, you do not want a ball of wax to roll in to your throat and block up your air way. That is why you have to check on the vacancy in your second rear molar empty socket that you have going at the time. So, what do you think you are going to do? You are going to get your tongue in there and hunt around for a wax ball or any similar round object with rolling properties. Your tongue bumps the stitches that Doctor Jones sewed on to you, but you do not feel a wax ball in there. Of course, you are unlikely to feel any thing of that kind, for the following reason. Doctor Jones does not place wax balls in empty tooth sockets. She might do it once in a while. It might be a prank she does from time to time. She does not do a prank this particular time. So, what do you think you do? Why, after some while, you put your tongue in it again. It might be only five minutes after the other time that you did it, or it might be the next day. You keep putting your tongue in there to satisfy your self that it is devoid of wax balls. Your tongue keeps on coming that way. It finds the stitches. It finds no wax ball. All of this time you are wondering, when am I going to be satisfied? Why is it I can not desist from picking at these stitches? When am I going to desist as I ought to? The answer is, you will not desist until you are walking through the gate of Amazon State College one fine morning and the stitches come loose. It is more of an arch than a gate. It is not called The Arch. It is called The Gate. Then you will bleed copiously all over your chin and your tee shirt. It is summer time, so that is what you will be wearing. You do not clot up well in warm weather, perhaps. People will be looking at you. It will be embarrassing.

It is some thing along that line. I did it, and I can not stop thinking about it. I was sleeping on the divan in Miss Lula's parlor. It is where I used to sleep. It was in the dark of the night, and she woke me up. She was in her night dress. I could see her hips

through it. Light was coming from the door of her bed room. That light came right on through her night dress, except where her hips were in the way, of course. That is why I saw Miss Lula's hips. Rather, I saw the shape of them. They were shaped like the curves of a cello where the long stem portion of it settles in to the resonating chamber portion of it, perhaps. Miss Lula's torso is a long stem, though she is a rather short statured individual. It settles in to her hips that way. Her hips are round and, I should say, welcoming. They are not truly welcoming, of course. They did not welcome me. Hips do not welcome a person, of course. Miss Lula's hips just looked that way to me, for some reason, or for some other reason.

Here is where the low down aspect comes in. It may be that every one has a low down aspect. Or it may not be, but I have one. Here it comes. Miss Lula was whispering some thing. She was whispering so that she would not wake up her son, who is Master Joshua Oleander. He was three years old at that time. Consequently, he required a good deal of sleep. I could not hear what she told me, with out I concentrate on her words. I did not concentrate on them. I concentrated on some thing else. This is what it was. The dark center of her body.

It was much like a night of a new moon. You look up at it, and you see it up there in the dark. It is a dark disk. You see the roundness of the disk of the dark moon. You see the fullness and the depth of it. You see it is a sphere, not a circle. Is it some thing you see, or some thing you imagine that you see? May be it is only a shadow. Or, it is not only a shadow. It might be you are seeing the moon in a dim earth light. The sun makes the light. The earth reflects the light. Now it is earth light. It hops up to the moon, just like that. Then down it comes again, and it lands in your eye. It is moon light

then. First, it is sun light. Then it is earth light. Then it is moon light. Then it is in your eye, bang. It does not hurt. That may be how it comes that you see the dark fullness of the moon. It is my thought.

Miss Lula was leaning over me. She was whispering, "Willy. Willy. Willy." I did not hear it. Rather, I heard it, but I did not make it out at that time. I have made it out at this time. The light came off a filament in an incandescent light bulb in a lamp on her night stand. It was not sun light. It was electric light. It came past her hip. Some photons of it reflected back from the silk or cotton or other fabric of her night dress, I imagine. Or, some of them reflected back from the skin on my fore head. They went through her night dress one more time, I imagine. Then, some part of them came on back out again, for this reason: they landed on her bodily secrets, then they reflected back from her bodily secrets. Then they came right in to my eyes. They landed in my eyes, and I saw some of her bodily secrets. Miss Lula is my beloved person. That is why I did not focus on what she was whispering, which was, "Willy. Willy. Willy," of course.

Her bodily secrets were not secret just because no one knew about them, of course. Any person who cared to take a thought, such as some jaded lascivious roué walking by Miss Lula on the street, or, such as some teen aged boy set up by his teen aged lusts walking by her on the street, or, such as some person like my self who longs to join his body with her body for romantic reasons, or for other reasons, knew about them, of course. They were not secret for that reason. They were secret for this reason. She hides them. If you hide some thing, it is a secret. Now here I am, uncovering her secrets. It is my low down side. You may say, She did not hide those things from you, did she? I

have thought about it. I have asked her about it. I will tell you what she said. I will not tell you now. I will tell you later.

This is the first secret that I saw. A darkness at the center of Miss Lula's body. It spreads across the bottom of her hips where they set on the tops of her two legs. I knew about it before I saw it, of course. Other women have the same darkness there.

Naturally, she has it too. My heart hurt when I saw it, for this reason. It is not some other woman's. It is hers. Or, for this reason. She showed it to me.

My eyes looked through Miss Lula's night dress at the shadow across the bottom of her long stem. That shadow was shaped much like the rim of a chalice. She was going on with her "Willy, Willy." I did not notice it at once. I noticed it after a while.

So, after a while I said, "Whut." It is how I say What.

She said, "Get up."

I said "I am up. God." I said that God because the warmness of her body was glowing on me. A person does not hide her bodily warmth. If a person lets you in close enough, you are going to feel it. For instance, when you hug a person, or when you wrestle a person, or when you carry a person on your back the time you are fishing and the person falls out of the canoe and you go in and get him, such as your brother, for example. Then he hurts his foot on a sharp stone in there, and you must carry him out of the canoe to the mud bank under the elm tree. The cicadas are buzzing and the sun is white in the branches above you and your brother's bodily warmth is on your back and so on and so forth. You may like it, but there is not much secrecy in it. It is more a secret at other times, such as when a woman in no thing but her night dress is leaning over you. You are casting your eye on the secrets under neath her long stem. You see her breasts

swinging. They are cutting out light from the light bulb in the lamp on the night stand next to her bed in her bed room on the other side of the parlor, much as her hips are doing. When you are a person who has not seen a person's breasts swing at all, and the warmth from her body is coming over you and so on, you may say a word such as God, or Lawdy, or some word along that line. It is why I said it.

Miss Lula said this to me. "Is something the matter?"

I said, "No ma'am."

Miss Lula said, "Come on in here." Then she went back to her room. I waited under my sheet for this reason. I was having a certain reflex. I was in my boxer shorts. I was waiting until my reflex eased a bit. Miss Lula was saying, "Ssst. Come on quick."

"I am coming in a minute," I said. I was waiting, but it was not easing.

I heard her say, Sst, Willy a few more times, so I stood up with my reflex poking out of my boxer shorts. I put my hands over it, and I went in to Miss Lula's bed room. I was hoping she did not remark on it. Or, I was not hoping it. It is hard to know. It is a jest.

Miss Lula could not be seen when I went in there. I could not see her. The plate glass window wall on the other side of her water bed could be seen. I could see it. It is the wall separating her bed room from Master Joshua Oleander's bed room. Master Joshua Oleander was in it. He was in his bed room. He was not in Miss Lula's bed room. Master Joshua Oleander was sleeping in it. He was sleeping in his own bed room, I mean. Or he was not sleeping in there, but it was a dark room at that time, so he was sleeping in there, I surmised at the time. He was not to be seen. I could not see him.

Here is my check list of the sights that were to be seen in Miss Lula's bed room at that time. I saw them. I recall, or I imagine, or I imagine that I recall, a good many of them, for this reason. My mind has picked on the sights in there over, and over, and over.

Here is my check list. My first item is the lamp on the night stand on the right side of the water bed. It is on the right side from your side. It is not on the right from the other side, which you are lying down in the water bed, and you are tossing on the water waves, and you are looking at the door, where I am with my hands over my reflex and so forth. From that side, it is on the left side. All so, no one is in that water bed. I am just giving you the symmetries. When I was on my way in to there, I imagined that some one might be in the water bed. I imagined it might be my beloved person, Miss Lula, but it was not her. It was no one. I did not see Miss Lula at all at that particular time.

So I am looking for her. Here is what I see. First, I see the lamp, for this reason. The light is coming from it. I stare at a light when I see one. For an example, I recall an examination I went to one time. A doctor was examining my eyes. It was an eye examination. His little flash light was flashing in my left eye. I looked at the light. I looked down the middle of it. I did not look away from it. I saw the filament and so on. I liked the hot bright glow in the middle of my eye. The doctor said, "Roy, come here." Roy was some other doctor. The first doctor said, "Look at this," then he handed Roy his flash light. Roy flashed the flash light in my left eye, so I looked at the light some more. Then Roy flashed the flash light in my right eye, so I looked at the light with my right eye. The first doctor said, "You're looking straight at the light." Well, of course I was. I like to look at a light.

The lamp on Miss Lula's night stand has a white lace doily over it. It is what next you see. It swoops down in curves, much like the curves of the curtain in front of the screen at the Dee Light Theatre and Cinema. It is where we saw *Dumbo* one time. It is all so where we saw *Casablanca* another time. We is either my self, Miss Isabel and her child Miss Dee Light Brown, or we is my self, Miss Lula and none of those Browns. Which is we depends upon which time it was – the *Dumbo* time, or the *Casablanca* time.

Then you see the tassels dangling from the doily. Then you see the crystals dangling from the tassels. The crystals chime in the breeze. The breeze blows from an electric fan on Miss Lula's walnut chiffonier. It is on another doily. The walnut chiffonier is not on a doily. The fan is on a doily. It is a flat doily, not a swooping doily. It is flat on the walnut chiffonier in front of a mirror on the walnut chiffonier. Then you see the electric fan, of course. Next, you see the mirror behind it. And what do you know? You see all of them again – the lamp, the doily that is swooping, the tassels and crystals and so on. They are in the mirror, this time. Then, you see a bank draught tucked in to the frame of the mirror. It has been there all summer. I have read this draught. It is for a million dollars. It says, *Services Rendered*, and it is signed, Mario.

Next, you see the plate glass window wall again. It is in the walnut chiffonier's mirror, which, it is opposite. After that you see, in the window in the mirror, your self. You are in your boxer shorts with your hands over your reflex. Your eyes are wide. The hair on your head is standing out in several directions. There is some hair on your chest as well. You think about this. The you in the mirror does not think. You think. Here is what you think. Does Miss Lula like a man's chest that has some hair on it, or does she like a man's chest that does not have hair on it? She may like a man's chest with hair on

it, but does she like a man's stomach with hair on it? There is hair on your stomach. You think, She may not like it much.

You smell a scent of patchouli. Miss Lula is an old hippie. "I am an old hippie, Willy." She has said it. She is not old. She is twenty four years old. This was on July eighth in the year 1976. It was Thursday. It was two fifteen ante meridiem. A digital clock is next to the fan. The digits are just numerals on plastic flaps that flip one flip a minute. They did not have a clock with a Central Processing Unit and a digital display for home use in the year 1976. Not in our home, any way. Miss Lula is older now. Today the date is November twenty eighth of two thousand seven. It is five oh three post meridiem. I make it that I have used or I have mentioned three senses of the word Old in this paragraph.

I am coming to what I noticed after I noticed the matters of Miss Lula's room, and smelled her patchouli scent, and so on. I smelled some other scent or scents, for example. I did not discern the source or sources of it or of them. It or they was or were a musky or simply musky, with out the article A on it, scent or scents. I did discern the source of her patchouli scent. It was from patchouli oil on her body. It was when she was near by, that I was detecting that scent.

It was after I was done with my retrospections on this scent affair that I noticed Miss Lula's feet. They were hanging out the bottom of her closet. They were the bottoms of her feet. They were facing up. The tops of them were facing down. I picture it this way. Miss Lula was standing on her knees in that closet. Or, she was sitting on her knees in there. It may be that there is a different word for it. I am looking for it. I have not found it. Now, if you are on your knees in a closet, or even if you are on your

knees out side of a closet, why, then the part of your legs that is between your ankles and your knees is under the other part of your legs that is between your knees and your hips. Those underneath parts are going the opposite way of the rest of you. It is a different polarity. Naturally, your feet are up side down at the time. That is why the tops of Miss Lula's feet were down on the floor and the bottoms of her feet were naked to my terrible gaze. I am saying it that way. It was square tunnels buzzing out my eyes like tools of destruction. Wickedness was coming out my eyes. It was buzzing.

I am up to the hard part. My reflex was hard. It is a sense of the word hard, but, it is an other sense I am up to. It is the sense of being not easy. I am up to the part that is not easy. I had my hand over my reflex, which, it had not eased up at that time. It is an other jest. When I am not easy, I will jest. Here it is any way.

Miss Lula said, "Sst, Willy," an other time. I came up to the closet. I was behind her. I was behind her behind, as a matter of fact. Her behind was looking right at me. You could say it. It would be a metaphor, of course. I am saying it that way. If you say it with out it is a metaphor, then it was not looking right at me, but it looked like a behind that was looking right at me, for this reason. I was looking so hard at it. It is still an other sense of hard, of course. It is two senses of look. It is two senses of behind. I am keeping track.

I am going to tell you what I saw. I am sorry for it, but here it is. Miss Lula was standing, or sitting, or other wise using some action of hers, to rest her knees on the floor of her clothing closet. Her clothing was draping on her back from hanging on hangers, which, they were hooked on a long pole in there. The clothing was not hooked. The hangers were hooked. There were long dresses and some slips and some other clothes

draping down on her. She was leaning over some thing, which, I did not see it at that time. She was staring at it in front of her. She was saying, Mmm, and, Oh lookee, and other items in that line of sayings. Her voice was as deep as it usually is, but it was muffled. Her night dress was pulled up due to fabric stresses and geometry and so on. Then there were her hind parts, which, they were pink. Now, of course they were going to be pink. She is a blond haired, pink skinned woman. They were not going to be some other color. I was not surprised, but it is different to know some thing than to see some thing. It is different when it is some thing you have never seen, whiles you have thought to see it a long while. At the beginning, I did not think to see Miss Lula's hind parts of themselves. Hind parts are not personal. I thought to see Miss Lula's person. It is personal. Her hind parts are on her person. It is why I thought to see them. I did not think, I wish I could look at Miss Lula's hind parts. I thought, I wish I could look at every single bit of Miss Lula's person. For the longest time, I thought to look her over with my square tunnels of vision. Then, at the longest last, I did.

Whiles I was doing my looking, Miss Lula was looking at some thing in front of her on the floor of that closet. She was going on with her expostulations, such as, Lookee, and, Oh My. I was behind her making my responses, such as, Uh Huh, and, My Goodness. I did not know what it was about. It was an automatic stratagem, such as this. Your eighth grade gymnasium teacher is an excellent hard ball pitcher. He throws a hard ball at the center of your eye brows. He has aimed at them for this reason. You never bring your gymnasium shoes. He has had it up to here. "Wilson, I've had it up to here," he says. Then, whip, he slings that ball at you side arm. Then, just like no thing, you put

up your left hand and you snare that ball about one inch in front of the center of your eye brows. You do not think about it. You just do it. It is an automatic stratagem.

It was that sort. I said, Uh Huh, and, Oh My, but my thoughts were not on it. They were on this. This is what they were on. Hairs. Golden little hairs were distributed on Miss Lula's hind parts. I had only known hind parts from statues in museums and pictures in magazines. The hairs are not depicted in them. If you think about it, then you will say to your self, Why of course her hind parts have hairs on them. Mine do. Hers are no different. But her hind parts are different, of course. They are nicer than mine, of course. They are more round and more smooth and more nice in every way, of course. That is not the issue, how ever. This is the issue. Miss Lula is a mammal. I am a mammal. We are both mammals. Mammals have hair on them. There fore, we both have hair on us. You do not think of it until you have seen it, how ever. It is no use to you by then. You have seen it for your self by that time.

At the time in question, I heard mee ows. Then I knew what Miss Lula was looking at. It was a kitty litter. It was not kitty litter. It was a kitty litter. You have heard the sound, I imagine. The tiniest mee ows you can imagine, I imagine. Miss Lula said, "Can you see?" She moved her self aside a little. She did it as follows. First, her right leg moved to the right, so her legs were spread apart. Then, her left leg moved right. It was following up on her other leg. It was getting out of my way, so that I could see straight beyond her left leg to the card board box with six kitties in it and the mother cat in it. The mother cat was curved around the little ones. She was licking their cauls. Those cauls were for the most part off them all ready, but she was licking them any way. I imagine that she did not know what she was doing. I did not know what I was doing

either. I just glanced at the box of kitties with the side of my eyes a little. I got the general idea that way. The main part of my eye glance was not on the card board box. It was stuck on Miss Lula. When she moved aside and spread her legs, why, then I glanced in there. Then my glance was stuck, for this reason. Miss Lula's personal private matters were tucked in there. I was looking at them. I had not looked at a woman's private matters prior to that time. They were not entirely as I had imagined them. I had imagined them several times, of course. I had not imagined all of them, how ever. You can not imagine all of a woman's female matters with out you have looked at some once, I imagine. I am not speaking in particular. I am speaking in general. I am speaking of a general woman's female matters. There is some variance among different women's matters, I imagine. I do not imagine any other woman has much better personal private matters than Miss Lula has, how ever. She is my ideal in this particular way, as in every other way. There fore, it is true not only in general. It is true in particular. You can not imagine Miss Lula's particular personal private matters with out you have seen them, I imagine.

This is what I did not imagine. Miss Lula's private personal matters resembled some what her general hind parts, only they were smaller. I am speaking of the way they looked from the direction I was looking at them. They are more affecting than her general hind parts. They affect you more. It is my opinion. They are more affecting being the same general shape, only smaller. It is the same as with kitties. They are the same general shape as a more general cat, only smaller. They are more affecting than a general cat is. Both of them affect you, but one affects you more than the other one. It is my opinion. You may have some other opinion. The comparison of Miss Lula's hind

parts with her more particularly private parts is along that line. Both of them have pink lobes with little golden hairs on them. I did not know about those little gold hairs in either place before this time that I looked right at them. Those hairs did not surprise me so much on her hind parts. They surprised me on her private parts. I do not know why. I have them on mine, so why should she not have them on hers? I do not care about mine. I can take them or leave them. I liked to look at hers, how ever. I liked it more than ever I liked to look at any thing else I can recall, except Miss Lula's own face, with her high cliff cheek bones, her dark lips with the white tips of her two front teeth peeking out under them, and with her light blue pretty eyes, and her blonde long hair along with her brown long hair, which, they were in side by side tresses along side her head, and with her brown elegant eye brows up side of those light blue pretty eyes of hers, and so on. So my glance stuck there a while.

After some of that while passed, some other matters came to pass. First, I remarked that my vision was on to that square tunnel line I have mentioned. It was buzzing the way I mentioned. My glance was roving. I was continuing to look over Miss Lula's bodily secrets. I was not looking over them with lust at this time, as I did at the previous time, how ever. Or, I was not looking over them with as much lust at this time as I did at the previous time, how ever. It is more like you are inspecting the head parts of a butter fly standing on a dandelion, or the hairy back parts of an ant in your magnifying glass on the pebbles in your drive way, when you are nine years old. A male child that age does not yet have all of his feelings, as I imagine. He has not grown in to them. At least, he had not grown in to them when he was I. A male child of my sort aims the sun light through his magnifying glass at the ant to see it curl up and smoke. It

is curiosity in some part, as I imagine. It is low down wickedness in some other part, I imagine. A female child that age is an other matter, I imagine. She will not aim the sun light and so on. I have not observed it. It is an induction. I do not know it. I can not imagine it.

So it seems to me, now, that I was not looking at Miss Lula's bodily secrets as a man might do, any more. I was inspecting them as a child of my particular sort might do. It was some more curiosity. For example, where are Miss Lula's nether openings? I did not see them. I have read about them. For example I have read Lady Chatterly's Lover. Lady Chatterly's lover said, "Tha' ye shit and tha' ye piss," or some words of that kind that have remained in my mind. He was an inspecting sort of fellow. If you are a male person, of course, then there are only two of those openings. And, if you are a female person, then there are three of those openings. I was looking for them. They must be in there some where. I did not know all of what they look like. I imagined it, but, I do not imagine that I imagined all of it. I imagined it wrongly in some part, or in some other part, I imagine.

Then I got along to considering some of the hairs on Miss Lula's private matters. These hairs were longer than the other hairs. They were not as pretty as the other hairs, which, they were more like peach fuzz. I liked those peach fuzz hairs, but the hairs I am telling you of at this time were some crinkly hairs here and there. They were like some crinkly ones on my own scrotum. I do not like mine much. I did not like hers much either. It was not my concern at the time, how ever. My concern was embryology. It is a trail of associations. It may be that I will tell you about my trail of associations at some time. I will not tell you about it now, how ever.

Just when my trail of associations had got on to embryology and so forth, that was when Miss Lula had had enough. She had had enough of looking at those new born kitties, perhaps. Or, she had had enough of my looking at her personal matters, perhaps. Or, she did not understand that I was looking at her matters, perhaps. Perhaps she thought I was looking through her, or around her, and I was looking at the kitties, as she was. Perhaps she was hazy. You might be hazy from waking up in the middle of the night when the momma cat is howling. Or you might be hazy from smoking a good deal of marijuana before you sleep at night, before you wake up in the night when the momma cat is howling. I do not know about it. I think about it from time to time. For some reason, or some other reason, she stood up, how ever. She did not say any thing. She simply went out of there. Then she came back again. Then she sat, or squatted, or performed an other action of that kind, or some other kind, in front of the kittens an other time, but now she had on some of her panties. You can not see private parts, which are in side a person's panties. They were yellow panties.

Miss Lula started in one more time at her sayings, such as, Oh my, and Lookee, and Oooo. I had two thoughts. The first one was this. Miss Lula has not had enough of looking at those new born kitties after all. I pondered it. The second one was this one. Kneel. It is the word I was looking for.

Chapter 2

I meet Miss Lula.

On the morning of January the first in the year 1975, I woke up in a bed, in a bed room, in a house that my friend Assistant Professor Louis Morse was living in. That day was a Wednesday. The time was six fifteen, ante meridiem. I was keeping track of it. I all ways do. I am a fairly late riser, but it is not all ways the case. I am not a late riser if I am so happy that I can not lie quiet. I am not a late riser if I have been in an air craft last night. I am not a late riser if I have escaped from the clutches of some one. It is not the case in such cases. In such cases, I will usually fall on to some bed, or some other bed, at four or five ante meridiem, after the taxi cab drives me to the place with the bed in it, after the air craft lands. Then I will snatch a few winks. Then I will rise with the sun, more or less. I will be sleepy, but I will rise for this reason. My heart will be pounding. I can not sleep with a pounding heart. I have found it. The sun light is in my eye lids and my heart is doing its pounding. I find I have stopped my dreaming and I have begun to think on my bodily matters, such as, These eye lids are not dark enough. This heart beat is a distraction. This bladder is needling me. This reflex is standing up. I am done then. I might as well give in.

On the morning of January the first in the year 1975, I was in the city of Gum. I had been there one or two times when I was a child, but this was my first time there when I was grown up, if you do not count times you might fly in to Gum City Airport from the Red Hand Land Aerodrome in a two seat Cessna air plane, then walk over to the taxi

stand and take a taxi cab in to the city to see the sights, when you were fifteen years old, or, then walk over the Tarmac™ to your other flight to New York City, to see the sights of that particular place, when you were sixteen years old. I was, I should say, partially grown up at those times. I was quite completely grown up in the year 1975, however, as far as I knew. I was twenty four years old at that time. Gum has the Amazon State College, which has some lawns, and a museum with some paintings, and several marble buildings with bronze statues and marble statues of some generals from the late Confederacy, and on along that line. It is the reason some one's mother might bring him there before he was grown up. She was a good enough mother, off and on. Gum is the capital of the Commonwealth of the Free Lands of Amazon. Those lands are known as counties in your land, I trow, if your land is not my land, which, it is the land of Amazon.

Now I am going to fill you in on the place. It has to be done. It is tedious. I will get it over with as fast as I can. Just read this geography I wrote down while I was myself in attendance at the New York University. It ought to be enough for you. It is in italics.

The city known as Gum, known originally as Cyme, then, by a corruption, as Chime, and finally by its present name through a back formation from the nature of its major local industry, is the capital of Amazon Commonwealth, one of the Original Fourteen Colonies, the smallest one of the fifty one states, and the country's chief supplier of spirit gum. It is a mere splinter wedged among the Virginias, the Carolinas, and the other ladies of our eastern seaboard. Amazon's speck of coast is a siren for that particular kind of ships' pilot who

values discretion over safety. Outlaw hulls split frequently on the Boney Banks, a bristle of crags and reefs shunned by more cautious mariners. Rumors of buried loot and salvageable wrecks are all ways circulating among the inns along the Coast Road. Inland of these fell sands lie vales of woodland, pale grass, and wild tobacco. Farmers are many in Amazon because of its rich soil; some cultivate the golden leaf and some grow the spirit tree (the sap of which is spirit gum, of course.) Others, perhaps more numerous, tend cannabis. Spirit gum notwithstanding, marijuana is the first cash crop measured by weight or dollars in Amazon, the most impoverished of the United States. In the land of Amazon, we have a saying: wealth to the wealthy, the rest to the rest. Cloud topped sentinels of the Spirit Mountains at the south end of the Appalachia Range guard its western border and draw rain from the atmospheric currents that track the Gulf Stream. Amazon's forests, consequently, are deep and lush and make excellent hide-aways for a variety of sub rosa enterprises. Marijuana production is only one of them. Bootlegging is an other; as remarkably few people know, Amazon is the last remaining dry state (alcoholically speaking).

There is more after that on religion, labor, industry and politics, including, for an example, my discourse on the mountain top removal coal extraction process. I admired extremely, at that time, our native Amazon geniuses and all of their works, so, I had in it about, for that example, the well known coal tycoon Mister King "King Coal" Griffin, who, he claimed that he was the inventor of that process. Some people say it is a lie, of course. Those people are not from Amazon. I am not going to put that discourse in here. I do not admire that fellow any more. I will give my reasons. I will not give them now.

I will give them later. Any way, I made up some of it. It was an A any way. It is why I kept it.

As to the history of the place, I suppose you have never heard any of it, with out you have been fated to live down there, or if you have not read it in a book, some time, back where you are. May be that you read it in your American History class on account of our gallant resistance to the Yankee boot at the tailored end of the War of the Secession, which, said resistance we kept going long past expectations. General William Sherman burned us down twice. He did it one spring time after the other. He had to do his savage pillage and rapine and loot his unholy booty twice in our particular land, for this reason. We took to the hills and swamps and forests, and harassed his lines and his baggage, with out let or cease or mercy. Many is the young Blue who lost his life in the fastnesses of Amazon. Many is the diary or letter or daguerreotype of a beardless boy from Wisconsin or Maine or Iowa that is lying under glass in our Land of Gum Museum of the Secession. They are prizes from the field of battle. We will not cough them up, though your Union states sue, as they have often and often, for the return of said artifacts in the Supreme Court of those United States to which we have been most unwillingly reunited. Most of the other states down there, General William Sherman had to rape and pillage and burn down those places just one time. Once his army reached the sea, most of those states gave in, unfortunately. Most of the people on our side of the contretemps felt that we were all in at that time. But Mister Hugh Horace Horatio, who, until that time, had been the premier tobacco auctioneer in the land of Gum – which is for the most part geographically coterminous with, all be it politically distinct from, Gum City, which is the capital city of Amazon, of course – Mister Horatio (a patron of the arts, a founder of

hospitals, museums, libraries and casinos, known from Florida to Virginia for his super fast diction, for his canny ways, and for his mellifluous tones) raised an army of three hundred school boys. Those boys were the only male persons in Amazon who could still shoulder a weapon at that time, unfortunately. Then he solicited by telegram and pony express, on the strength of his notarized rolls of those children, a buck general's commission from our late President Jefferson Davis. Then, upon receipt of said signed and notarized commission, he forthwith bushwhacked General William Sherman in his camp, which was bivouacked on the Boney Banks. Then came the Merry Chase, as it is called in our Amazon history books, in which General Horatio led General Sherman further and further in to gloomy hollows of Misery Swamp in western Amazon, where the mosquitoes and malaria and so on done many a young Yankee down to his end, before Sherman caught up with Horatio at Bloody Wood. You must be familiar with that dolorous slaughter. The famous rally cry of General Horatio must be well known to you as well, even if you have not studied your history of down there. It was delivered at the end of the well known in parts Gummian Address, which General Horatio delivered from the steps on the north facade of the House of Burgesses when they led him up to the gallows. That was the notorious Gallows of Ninety Nine Necks, which your President Abraham Lincoln ordered up to put quietus to the valorous captains of our resistance. One after an other, they climbed those steps to doom with their heads held high. It is a stirring tale we all learn in the third or fourth grade down there. We learn all about General Horatio standing with fearless eye before the abashed and guilt wrung General Sherman, his wrists compassed with chains behind his back, his silk shirt all billowing in the wind, and, brilliant in the sun of a clear blue day, his silver hair flowing, and his

asking General Sherman, then, would he mind, please, binding it up for him behind his neck, so as not to interfere with the rope. Then, after General Sherman ties back General Horatio's sunlit locks for him, our brave commander turns to the assembled multitude and delivers the partially well known address in which he utters the immortal words. I do not recall what those words were at this time. You can look them up. They are on the Internet. It is enough about the Commonwealth of Amazon.

First I finished my sleeping and gave up about it, then I assembled my mind. It was not assembled at that time. I had to lie there and assemble it. First, I looked over a dream that I was having. An air plane crash was in it, and a woman was in it. She was as lovely as an angel, or she was an angel. I had dreamed about her before. I had not seen her around any where, how ever. She said some thing to me. The plane crashed. I was in that plane. That was an all together indescribable event, so I will not describe it. Then, here she comes. I can not retail her words to you. I do not remember what they were. I liked them, how ever. I liked them as much as any thing. I can not look them up, how ever.

I looked out a window on the wall to my left. I was still looking at my dream as well. I did not wish to come all the way out of my dream, so I did not move my head or my arms or my legs. I just swiveled my eyes. A branch, bereaved of leaves, was out there. Behind the branch was no thing but blue sky. Now, prior to that day, I had been waking up in Culptown, in Red Hand Land. I had been a working man. I guess I woke up there five hundred forty eight mornings in a line. Before I woke up in Culptown, I woke up on the island of Manhattan, which is larger than, and all most, but not exactly, geographically coterminous with, New York County, in New York State. New York

County is geographically coterminous with the Borough of Manhattan, not with the Island of Manhattan. It is not a Rotten Borough as you or I, or some other person who is, in all probability, a political scientist of the land of England, normally conceives it. It is a New York City borough as people in New York City normally conceive it. Of course, people from Amazon conceive that it is rotten, how ever. Most people out side of New York City conceive that way, of course. Most of that time, I was a New York University college student. I woke up on Manhattan about one thousand four hundred thirty mornings, but they were not in a line. There were some times off to go back to Red Hand Land, for this reason. It was Christmas vacating time, or, it was summer vacating time. Before I was waking up in that location, I was waking up in Culptown an other stretch of time. That stretch stretched, more or less without a break, to the year 1950, when I arrived on your planet. It is a jest. My father were born on a farm near Culptown, and so was I. My father's people sold their farm, or lost it, or died out from under it. Many is the family of Red Hand Land that has quit the farming trade in one of those fashions. I do not know which of those fashions was our family's fashion, for this reason. My father did not tell me. He did never tell me much of any thing.

Now I am continuing on how I put my mind in order. The first item was, Where Am I? Why, I am in Gum. I thought it. I felt gladness, then I was rather surprised, so I thought it again with an exclamation, as follows. I am in Gum! That is how I thought it the second time. I stopped thinking it after that. The next item was, How Did I Get Here? I did not ask it. I just opened my eye lids wide a bit. It is a questioning motion. You feel a question in your heart when you do it. Then, you search your mind. When you find what you have been seeking, why, then you have your answer, perhaps. Then

you may know what the question was, perhaps. You do not necessarily ask the question. I did not necessarily ask it. I did not ask it at all. I rolled tape. It is what a man says in a television. Roll Tape. I did it. I did not do it in a television. I did it in my mind. It is a metaphor, of course. You can not roll tape in your mind, of course. You can not roll any thing in there.

This tape has two parts. In the first one, I am in Culptown. My father is there with me. We are standing in the drive way. It is December thirty first of the year 1974. It is yesterday. We are putting my valises in the boot of his car. It is a nineteen forty nine Nash automobile. It is fairly well kept up. It has kept up fairly well. That car and I are about the same age. To be the same age is harder on the person than it is on a well kept car for a while. Then, it is harder on the car than the person for a while. After that, it is harder on the person again for an other while. After that, the car is generally in a junk yard, but, if it is not in a junk yard, I would prefer to be the car rather than to be the person at that juncture. It is not that juncture at this time. It is a prior juncture. I am fairly well. The car is fairly well as well, but it is a small car. I am rather small my self, but no one is packing valises in to my boot. It is an other jest.

My father tries it a while. First, he puts the cloth one over the leather one. The spare tire butts over the top of it. He is trying to squeeze the cloth one between. I say "Pop, do not break my shells."

I have my shells in my cloth valise. The valise is green. The shells are egg shells. I have collected them. It is an egg shell collection. I am looking at it right now. The present tense of the sentence, I Am Looking At It Right Now, is December sixth in the year 2007. My egg shells are on the sill of my cell window. Snow is falling.

There fore, of course, my father did not break my egg shells. But he all most did. Snow is not falling in Culptown on December thirty first of the year 1974. It all most never snows there, of course. That particular day has gray skies and a mist. My father is unhappy. I am happy, but I am nervous. I am protecting my egg shells. I say, "Let me do it," and he says, "I can do it," and I say, "I do not care to test the proposition," and he says, "You big headed, ain't you?" So I say, "Naws." "Yes you are," says he. He is getting red in his face. He says, "Just like your mother."

My father has a face much like that of a kitchen witch. The reason is, his teeth are out. He has the face then. He does not have it now. Now is the year 2007. He is deceased now. He has predeceased me. There fore, he does not have that face any more, I imagine. I am using my present tense two ways. I am using two present tenses. A kitchen witch is a doll you hang above your kitchen tap, of course. The long nose of it and the long chin of it come to points. They point at each other. My father has his teeth out for this reason. It is a holiday. One more item on my father's face is bothering me. He has a rash on it. His face rash is not bothering me. His face rash is a war injury, in a manner of speaking, or in some other manner of speaking. It is a disease from some jungle, or some other jungle, in the islands of New Zealand, which, it infected him when he was a soldier of the Second World War. There fore, it is an honorable face rash. His discharge was not honorable. His face rash was honorable. But this is what bothers me. I am going back to one of my present tenses. His face rash is under his nose. My father shaves around his face rash. Consequently, he has some hair under his nose. It is a half circle under there, from one of his nostrils to the other one of his nostrils. It is a ring, or a ruff, or a collar, perhaps. When I see it, I am reminded of a moose bird. That bird sinks

its neck in to its white feathered collar. It is a vulture with one remaining habitat in North America. That habitat is the Misery Swamp, east of the Spirit Mountains. The moose bird will consume only the sweetbreads of an Amazon moose. That bird has a long curved beak, some what resembling a long curved nose, with which it excises those sweetbreads and flings them about in a passion. After flinging them this way and that, it sucks them down with a bobbing, swallowing motion. You can watch it on Amazon Public Television some time. The ring, or ruff, or collar under my father's nose, or its resemblance to the ring, or ruff, or collar of the moose bird, or both of those, is what bothers me. Take your choice.

Then comes the next part of the tape. It is some time later in the day. We are in the Nash automobile. I am not driving it. My father is driving it. I do not know how to drive it. Miss Cinnamon Askew and Miss Lula Smith taught me how to drive a car, but they taught me at a later date. That date was November in the year 1975. The year 1975 was the year prior to the year that I lived in Miss Lula's house. Whiles they were teaching me, Miss Cinnamon Askew was the one who was living in Miss Lula's house. Then, they had their fight. Then Miss Cinnamon Askew moved over to Paris in the land of France. She was an air plane stewardess. Her route was Gum Paris, so she just moved to the other end of that route. I have not seen her since then. When I did see her, she was pretty, for these reasons. She was pretty tall. Her hair was pretty orange. It had pretty tight curls. Her face had these items. Gray eyes. Wide cheeks. A small little mouth. Orange freckles. I do not know about it, but I imagine that it was Miss Cinnamon Askew who threw the first punch or pulled the first hair. It is her own hair, and her freckles and her mouth, that make me imagine it. It is not a good reason to imagine it that way, but I

imagine it that way any way. Miss Cinnamon and Miss Lula taught me to drive cars. Miss Cinnamon's car was a nineteen seventy Volvo stick. Miss Lula's car was not her car at all. It was Assistant Professor Louis Morse's car. That was Pegasus. It was a small automatic car of some kind, or some other kind. After they taught me, I could drive my father's car, if I had been in it again, some time. I never was in it again, how ever. There fore, I never drove it.

We are on Sunrise Highway in Red Hand Land. My father is next to me. I am looking at him. There are trees beyond the window on the other side of his head by the side of the road. They are going by in roughly uniform northerly velocity of about sixty miles an hour. The reason is, we are traveling at a roughly uniform velocity of about sixty miles an hour in a southerly direction. It is just after we have come from a visit of farewell to my mother in the Cold Spring Forest Gentle Retreat, where he is keeping her a while. The reason he is keeping her there is that she came at him with a butcher knife. A girl in the lobby of that place was fat, and she had acne. She was not in her clothes, but in a dowdy dressing gown. Some people were holding her up by her elbows, and she was screeching, "I can't hack it." I did not know that use of the word Hack at that time. I remember nought else about her. I do not remember a great deal about my mother on that particular afternoon, either. Her hair was slick. It is black hair. Black is the usual color of it. Slick is not its usual condition of it. I do not know what it means, but for some reason, or, for some other reason, the slickness of it has disturbed me. So, I am disturbed. I watch the trees behind my father's head going by. It occurs to me that I do not know the names of them. I ask my father to tell me what the names of them are, but he does not know, or he is not saying. "Do you know the name of that white one?" I ask him. Then,

for White, substitute Grey, or Black, or Mottled, or Tall, or Bent and so on. I ask him those questions. He does not tell me the name of a single tree. He has his glum face on. Some time later we get to the Red Hand Land Aerodrome, and he kisses my fore head.

Some time after that time, I took an air plane ride over the Spirit Mountains. The Spirit Mountains are just the Amazon end of the Appalachian Mountains, of course. Then I was there. There is the land of Gum. There is all so the land of Amazon. You can not be in Gum with out you all so be in Amazon, of course. You might be in Amazon with out you be in Gum, but you can not do it the other way. It is obvious.

After I finished that item, as far as I know, my mind was finally assembled. So I went down to breakfast. It was toast and sausage and eggs frying in butter, and some coffee, and some orange juice. It was all cooking, except the orange juice. Assistant Professor Louis Morse was cooking it. I was smelling it. You can not smell the orange juice from that distance, how ever. But when I got down the stairs, it was there in transparent glass drinking glasses, so you could see it. I saw it. Then I saw Assistant Professor Louis Morse, my friend. He was in his dragon gown. It is silk and dragons are portrayed upon it. His feet were bare. It was a warm day. It is usually a warm day in Amazon, with out you happen to be up to your neck in water on some occasion, or on some other occasion.

Assistant Professor Louis Morse said, "You're here."

I said "I am, Louis. I am that I am." He hugged me. He had to lean his right arm away, for he had his sausage fork in it. He had to lean his face away as well. The reason is, he has a stiff beard, which sticks out at you. It is a square goatee. It looks rough to me, for this reason. It looks like a pad of Brillo™. It is not as rough as Brillo™, of

course. It is hair. Assistant Professor Louis Morse and I are both about five feet six inches tall. I do not have a beard, how ever. I do not have curly hair. I do not have much hair at all at this time. I did have an abundant amount of it at that time, how ever. It was on the top of my head and so on. It was straight hair. It was not curly hair. It curled under my ears some what, but that is all. It curled that way for this reason. It was that long. I shaved it off where it grew on my face, but for the most part, Assistant Professor Louis Morse did not shave his own face. There was an exception high up on his cheeks, which was a phase of dark blue stubble. It came right up to the bottom eye lids on both of his eyes. I imagine he had a good reason to shave that part of it. The alternative is startling to contemplate. I am contemplating it now. I am startled. You may think I am describing a fellow on the Wolf Man line, or a bearish kind of fellow. I may think the same thing my self, but Assistant Professor Louis Morse's face was not at all a lupine face or an ursine face, in a matter of fact. It was a rather sweet face, as I judge faces. A wolf does not have remarkably large, soft, vertical, oblong brown eyes with pupils that fill up its eye holes from the bottom eye lid clear up past the top eye lid. A wolf has horizontal brown eyes, it seems to me. It does not have vertical brown eyes, it seems to me. A bear may have them, but, they will not be oblong. They will be round. They will not be soft. Or they will be soft. You will not trust it if you are a sensible person, how ever. A bear is a moody fellow. One minute you are feeding it some bread from your kit, and you see the baby bear come lumbering around the shady oak tree, which, it starts investigating your pack. You have leaned that pack against the trunk of that tree. You shoo that baby bear and, on the instant, you find that your bear fellow is not a fellow at all. It is a mother. Then you must climb up the shady oak tree. It is a side

track. I am done with it now. Assistant Professor Louis Morse has soft eyes. He does not bite. It is yet another jest. I will let you know another detail, so that you will have the picture of him in your mind. In the middle of his rough appearing goatee Assistant Professor Louis Morse has red lips, or dark pink lips, perhaps, in the form of a little bow. It is not a bow for ribbons. It is a bow for arrows, such as the bow and the arrows that appear in the story of Antimorpheus. It is a story he has told to me, as you will soon find out. A bear does not have lips like a little bow, or lips like a large bow, I imagine. A bear does not have lips at all, I imagine. When you are climbing the tree, you do not have time to study it.

As we hugged, Assistant Professor Louis Morse had his reflex going, which, it bumped my hip, the which, it was only in under pants. The reason is, I was only in under pants. They are not the boxer variety of under pants. They are the white cotton brief variety of under pants, which, they show the size and shape of your male parts. It is a reason he had his reflex going, perhaps. Assistant Professor Louis Morse carries a male to male sexual orientation, so that is what will happen from time to time. I ought to have had more care perhaps. I have thought about it. I did not think about it then. I thought about it later. This is what I thought. I was gratified by his attentions, but, I was callous and cruel if I did not plan to gratify him in any way. I did not plan it. Therefore, I was callous and cruel, in fact. It is another one of my confessions.

At that particular time a person said, "Louis?" but I did not see the person. The person's voice was behind me and up the stairs. It was an attracting voice. It was attracting me. It sounded like the color of smooth white sand with some brown sand grains in it here and there. "Louis?" it said another time. I felt sand running through my

fingers. A chill of goose bumps climbed up the skin on the out side of my spine. According to a Life Magazine science book that I read as a child, if you have a spine, why, then you are descended from the trilobites. They were triangular creatures with a fringe of many small and disgusting tentacles. The trilobites were not disgusted, of course. I was disgusted, of course. So, I am descended from them. I do not often imagine it, but I imagined it at that time. I imagined feeling what those trilobites feel. My Life Magazine book portrayed them pulsating and pullulating in the currents of water and the currents of time. I imagined the feel of the pullulating and the pulsating and the feel of the currents of water and the currents of time. You may not imagine I imagined those items, or, especially, that I imagined those items in the blink of my eye. I did not blink my eye. It is figural speech, of course. I did imagine those items, how ever. It is longer to say it than it was to do it. That word It means, Feel Goosebumps Go Up The Skin On The Out Side Of My Trilobite Spine.

Then came a breeze, ever so light. The person was going by me behind my back and making that breeze. The air she was moving lifted some sweat off my back as she went by, and fingers of coolness ran across me at that time; a caress. The person was not caressing me. Her air was caressing me. Then she went past me and around me, turning in a swirling, her hair swirling, her look through night gown swirling. I looked through it, of course. I will not tell you at this particular time what I saw through it at that particular time. Some matters, if you have not seen them before, you might as well be blind when you do see them. I had not seen them before. I was like Balboa on a peak in Darien. I am as low down as the next person, but I was at that time innocent according to the conventions of speech. I was a complete innocent in that manner of speaking, in a

matter of fact. Consequently, my eyes could not take in those matters. My eyes did take them in, of course. I am wrong about it. It was my brain that did not take them in, perhaps. They went in to my eye balls and proceeded on to my optic nerves as other matters might do, I suppose. I do not know where else they could go. Then they just went smash to pieces when they arrived at my brain, it seems to me. They got to my brain in smithereens of brown protuberating curls, and patches and globes and tubes and folds of pink, and so on and so forth, accompanied by a feeling like a shock of lightning from my heels straight to my ears. I did see that person's gold and brown streaked hair, how ever, turning around her head, colored some what like her sandy voice. It was a nimbus or an aureola, perhaps. A halo.

She put an arm around the neck of Assistant Professor Louis Morse and smiled at me. She grinned big buck teeth. They had some tobacco stains on them, but she was so pretty that I did not mind it. She was so pretty I had to squint. It was that light and bright where she looked at you.

Assistant Professor Louis Morse is not pretty, of course. He is not remarkably fine looking at all. I do not mind it. His teeth are not buck teeth, but he has two front teeth some what like a beaver's front teeth. They peep out from within his tiny bow lips. It is incongruous. If you did not like the fellow, you might say he had a toad's eyes, even though they were as soft looking as I have told you. You might say his cheeks were round under their blue stubble, so much so, that they put your mind in the way of a squirrel busy with nuts, but you might say it only if you did not like him. I did like him, and I still do like him, but I can not get hold of him. He did not grin when he smiled. He still does not grin, for ought that I know of it. I do not have a word for his kind of smile.

He has his lips pointed together like a sewn up purse, or, like a man who knows something you do not know. It was the case, of course. It is the reason why he was an assistant professor and I was a mere peon. A mere peon is a college teacher who is not even an assistant professor. As a usual matter, he or she does not have his or her doctor's degree. I did not have mine. Assistant Professor Louis Morse did not have his either, but he was an assistant professor any way. I did not know the explanation. Consequently, I inferred this. He knew something I did not know.

At the time that those two were greeting me, Assistant Professor Louis Morse's reflex poked out. It was a violet color and it seemed to be enormous. Mine is a smaller, pinker one. I would be interested to know, is his average sized, or is mine average sized, or is neither one of them average sized? I all so would like to know, is violet a usual color of a reflex, or is pink a usual color? I have not seen an other reflex than those two. There fore, I do not know. Assistant Professor Louis Morse pulled his robe over his particular reflex and said, "She's naughty." The referent of that pronoun She was my beloved person, Miss Lula. It is how I met her. She was not my beloved person at that time. She was my beloved person at a later time. It was not very much later, how ever. She played at pulling Assistant Professor Louis Morse's gown open and he played at slapping her hand away. It was a surprising scenario. There fore, I was surprised. I was all so astounded. Miss Lula was the woman of my dream. She was all so the woman of my dreams. It is two reasons. I was astounded from both of them.

Miss Lula said, "You lookin funny at me, sir." She said it in the mocking manner of Assistant Professor Louis Morse. He was all ways calling you Sir to mock you, if you were I. Which, I was, of course.

I said, "I have seen you before."

Miss Lula stretched her grin over her whole bottom of her face at that time. She popped up her eye brows and spread her eye lids as wide as they could be. It was as if to say, Wasn't that a good trick? What she said in actual fact was, "Well of course you have."

I said, "I do not understand."

She said, "Well of course you don't."

"Whut is going on?" I said.

She said, "Oh you'll find out." I did not find out at that time, how ever. I found out later.

Chapter 3

I act a fool.

This is how I met some other people, such as Assistant Professor Louis Morse him self, for example. He is from No Name Woods. His name was only Mister Louis Morse at that time.

"Where you from, Louis?" I asked him one time.

He said, "I'm from No Name Woods, man."

I am interested in forests. So I asked him, "Is it a forest?"

Mister Louis Morse made his faux grin at me. You have seen a faux grin if you have seen The Man Who Came to Dinner. It is a movie with Mister Edgar Montillion Woolley, the well known thespian, and Miss Bette Davis, the other well known thespian. In a faux grin, a fellow with a fine beard, such as the ones that Mister Edgar Montillion Woolley and Mister Louis Morse have or had, will display his teeth in a prolonged sarcastic or ironical gesture. It may be that a fellow with out a fine beard may make a faux grin as well. I have not seen it. I have seen Mister Louis Morse make his faux grin several times. The first time, he was carrying his valise out the door on the eleventh day in December in the year 1971. The hour was eight eighteen ante meridiem or so. That day was a Saturday.

I said, "Have a nice time home." It was at that time that I thought, I Do Not Know Where His Home Is, so I asked him. Then he made his first faux grin. After I asked him, is it a forest, he made his second faux grin. I have mentioned that one. The

Man Who Came to Dinner was broad cast to our television at eleven o'clock post meridiem on the tenth day of December of that year. It was the day before. That day was a Friday, of course. It is the reason I knew it was the same faux grin. I remembered it. There fore, I recognized it. After he made his first faux grin, I asked Mister Louis Morse, "What are you doing with your teeth, Louis?"

"It's a faux grin," he said.

"Did I see it on Mister Edgar Montillion Woolley's face on TV last night?" I said.

"No doubt he picked it up in the same circumstances I did," Mister Louis Morse said. "The customs of the demimonde evolve only very slowly, even in the present hurried age," he said. That was the time I asked him those questions about No Name Woods. "Oh, it's a leafy sort of Hell. It's in New Jersey." It is what he said when I asked him.

So I said, "Contradiction." He was all ways saying it to me, so I said it to him. "Contradiction." Assistant Professor Louis Morse is, or was—or, is and was—an assistant professor of Philosophy. Before he was an assistant professor of philosophy, he was only a mere peon toiling in the Gardens of Philosophy. He was, or is, schooled in the philosophy of logic. He was, or is, logical. I am going to stick with the past tense now. Mister or Assistant Professor Louis Morse knew a contradiction when he heard you do one. When he heard me do one, he would let me know. He would say, "Contradiction." Then, he would hold his left hand's palm out, like this. (I am holding mine out at this time.) You had to give Mister or Assistant Professor Louis Morse a nickel every time you did one. He said he was going to get rich off us that way, because we all did so many of them, I, and Mister or Assistant Professor Henry Shine, and Mister

or Assistant Professor Joel Mercy. Some times, I did not happen to have a nickel on me. It was all right with Mister or Assistant Professor Louis Morse. He had one of those coin dispensing devices on his belt, like an ice cream pedlar's. It did not befit the three pieced suit he was all ways wearing, but he had it there any how. If you did not have a nickel on you, why, Mister or Assistant Professor Louis Morse made change for you. If you had no money on you at all, Mister or Assistant Professor Louis Morse called you a piker, and he made a note.

"You fucking piker," Mister or Assistant Professor Louis Morse would say. "I'll just make a note," he would say, and he would get out his pad. It was a green spiral note pad embossed Veritas and so on. He kept it in his shirt pocket under his waistcoat. Mister or Assistant Professor Louis Morse wore cream colored silk shirts and dark blue, or dark green, wool ties and worsted blue or gray matching, or complementary, waistcoats and suit jackets most of the time, when the academic term was in progress. He wore a matching gold watch and gold fob as well. They did not match the others of his accoutrements. The others of his accoutrements were not gold. Rather, his watch and fob matched a watch and fob worn by Assistant Professor Henry Shine, who is an other one of my friends. He did not wear it when he was only Mister Henry Shine, how ever. Mister or Assistant Professor Henry Shine was Mister or Assistant Professor Louis Morse's best friend, as well as my own best friend. First, neither Mister Henry Shine nor Mister Louis Morse wore a gold watch and a gold fob. Then, Mister Louis Morse went from Manhattan to Gum and became Assistant Professor Louis Morse. Then, Assistant Professor Louis Morse wore his gold watch and his gold fob. Then, Mister Henry Shine went there. Then, he wore his own gold watch, and so on.

All of that was my plan. I said, "Louis, why don't you go down to Amazon State and check it out? If they hire you, then I'll have someone to talk to when I go home." I said it for this reason. I was planning that I would go home. Mister Louis Morse took up my plan. I do not know why. He does not ordinarily take advice from me.

When he became Assistant Professor Louis Morse, he was not Doctor Morse, but he was Assistant Professor Morse any way. It was a cute trick. Mister Henry Shine got off the phone one day. "Louis talked himself into the Amazon job. Cute trick," he said.

I said, "Amazing," for this reason. It was amazing. It was amazing for this reason. Mister Louis Morse had not finished up his dissertation. Grues and bleens were in his dissertation. Those are philosophical colors, or some thing, or some thing else. I do not know about it. Mister Louis Morse did not know about it either. He would sit up with me in the kitchen, some days, talking about it at two o'clock, ante meridiem, or three o'clock, ante meridiem. "I don't get it. I don't get it. I don't get it," he would say. Then he would quaff his Beef Eaters. It is a variety of gin, of course. The bottle is square. Then he would knock his fore head on the table two or three times. Then he would say, "Boo hoo." He did not sob in the manner usually indicated by the words Boo Hoo. He just said the particular words Boo Hoo. He did not get it. Consequently, he did not finish up his dissertation. Further consequently, he did not become Doctor Louis Morse. You customarily do not become Assistant Professor Fill In Some Name Here with out you first become Doctor Fill In The Same Name Here. Some times, you do not become Assistant Professor Fill In Some Name Here even if you have become Doctor Fill In That Name Here Again. So, it was amazing. So, I said, "Amazing." It is an other side track. Now I am going back to an other one. Here I go.

After Mister Louis Morse became Assistant Professor Louis Morse, he purchased his gold watch and his gold fob. He was wearing them when Mister Henry Shine and I came for a visit. It was a home visit, as far as I was concerned. It was a job interview, as far as my friend Mister Henry Shine was concerned. Assistant Professor Louis Morse was, or is, an operator. He was operating on Amazon State College. It was transplantation surgery. It is one more jest. Assistant Professor Louis Morse transplanted Mister Henry Shine. He was Doctor Henry Shine by that time. After he was transplanted, my friend Mister Henry Shine became Assistant Professor Henry Shine. Then, he purchased his own gold watch and his own gold fob. Then he wore them himself. It is the chronology.

Assistant Professor Henry Shine did not wear his suit most of the time. Assistant Professor Henry Shine wore his suit when he went to a wedding or a funeral, perhaps. At most other times, such as times that he and Assistant Professor Louis Morse walked from our house on Perry Street, in Manhattan, over to the campus, or from our house on Samuel Mudd M.D. Avenue in Gum, over to the campus, which, of course, it is an other campus, then he did not wear it. He wore long denim jeans with a watch pocket in them, and a denim work shirt, and a brown leather belt, and brown leather work boots. His jeans were long for this reason. The length of his legs.

My self, I do not wear long jeans, of course. My legs are not long. I do wear long johns. I am in the land of Arctica, and it is snowing. As far back as my knowledge of the matter extends, it has never snowed in the land of Amazon. I imagine that it has not snowed there beyond that extension, either. Amazon is hot, most days. It gets dank at times, but it does not get out right cold at times. You can say it never gets cold. I am

saying it. Never the less, Assistant Professor Louis Morse wore his suit, or his other suit, or his second other suit, in every season. His green spiral pad would be in which ever one he was wearing. His pencil would be in it as well. Assistant Professor Louis Morse would lick the point of his pencil. He made sure you saw him lick it. Then he would frown, and squint, and write down your five cent debt. He made a show of it. It was his pedagogical technique.

Assistant Professor Joel Mercy said this to him one time. "What's with the act?" The only reason he was in a position to ask a sharp question was this. Assistant Professor Louis Morse transplanted him too. Never the less, he asked it. He was grieved. He had accumulated a grievance. I will tell you about it at the right time. This is not it.

Then Assistant Professor Louis Morse looked up at Assistant Professor Joel Mercy. He looked up in to Assistant Professor Joel Mercy's eyes. He had to do it like that. He said one time, "I so dislike looking up at that man. " At that time, how ever, he said, "Well yes, Joel. Precisely. It's an act. "

"That much I knew," Assistant Professor Joel Mercy replied.

"It's a pedagogical technique. You might consider working out a few of your own," Assistant Professor Louis Morse said.

"I ain't your student, Louis." It is what Assistant Professor Joel Mercy said at that time.

Then my friend Assistant Professor Louis Morse reached up and patted my house mate Assistant Professor Joel Mercy on his head. He had to stand on his toes to do it.

"There there, Joel" he said. "Please don't feel badly."

"Practice your pedagogy on someone else, Louis," and so on, and so forth, Assistant Professor Joel Mercy said to him. It was a dispute. I am going to tell you about it and so forth.

Now I am going to tell you how I met those two. They and my best friend, Mister Henry Shine, were renting the house on Perry Street. That street is in lower Manhattan. They were learning to be philosophers at the obscure Manhattan Institute of Philosophy. Mister Louis Morse would often introduce him self this way. "I'm a peon at the obscure," and so on. That institute is up Broadway from the well known New York University and it is down Broadway from the well known Columbia University. That Broadway is the well known Broadway of song and story.

On the day that I met him, I said to Mister Louis Morse, "What do you do for a living, Mister Morse?"

He said, "I am a mere toiler in the Gardens of Philosophy, sir. A peon."

I said, "Where are those gardens, Mister Morse?"

Mister Louis Morse looked at me a while and raised his eye brows as if he was wondering some thing. He did not say what he was wondering, how ever. He said, "The obscure Manhattan Institute of Philosophy. In short, M. I. P. Perhaps you know of it?" Then he made a parenthetical aside. When he made one, he would describe parentheses with his index fingers in a wide, round gesture. So he made a round, wide gesture. Then he put his hand over his mouth in a funnel gesture. Then he whispered this. "That means that what I am about to say is a parenthetical aside." Then he dropped his funnel hands and made his voice normal. Mister Louis Morse's normal voice is a resonating basso

profundo. Then Mister Louis Morse said this. "Although it is unlikely under the circumstances."

"What circumstances?" I said.

He said, "Why, that it is obscure, of course." He looked at me in a way that led me to suspect that he suspected that I was not at the top of my game today. "Are you at the top of your game today?" he said.

I did not answer that question. I answered the other question. Here is the reason. I was at the top of my game. May be that I have not been there since. I said, "No, I have not heard of M.I.P. Is it famous?" It was in the year 1970. It was the twenty ninth of August of that year. The day was a Saturday. It was ten sixteen, post meridiem, or ten seventeen, post meridiem, or so. I and Mister Louis Morse were in the parlor of that house on Perry Street, and so was my valise. It was the green cloth one that I put in to the boot of my father's Nash automobile at a later time. I had brought it with me to New York City on a Peter Pan bus this particular time. These items were in it. Two under pants. Two tee shirts. One pair of dungarees. Two pairs of black socks. A flannel shirt. A cotton shirt. A tooth brush. A boxed set of The Letters of John Keats 1814 – 1821 Edited by Hyder E. Rollins in two volumes, which, I had just bought that boxed set. It has hard covers. The man who was in the store wanted to sell me a soft covered one, but I would not let him. One issue of Playboy. It had a photograph of a woman lying on her back. She was not wearing her clothes. Pink flower petals were all over her female area. I committed some of my lesser misdeeds while gazing on her, or, on it. It was rather sentimental for an image of its kind, I imagine. I am sentimental, I imagine. A cloth ledger with brown leather corners, but they are not genuine leather, I believe. The title of

it is Ledger. I wrote my notes in it. They are private. Principia Mathematica by Lord Bertrand Russell and Sir Alfred North Whitehead. I have been trying to read it since I was fourteen years old, but I have lost my way.

Mister Louis Morse said, "Ah yes. The Famous question. It is a famous question."

"What plants do you garden at M.I.P.?" I said.

Mister Louis Morse disfavored me with a suspicious look. He said, "I am an acolyte of Ludwig Josef Johann Wittgenstein."

I said, "Is that a deity of some kind?"

Mister Louis Morse said, "A gardener of some kind."

"It is a jest," I said at that particular time.

Mister Louis Morse said, "I see. Are you impaired, sir?" I was a fool for a jest at that time. I could tell a hawk from a hand saw, how ever, I did not care to at that time. I was, or I am, or I was and I am, a fool in some matters. When you are a fool in one particular matter, it spreads all over, apparently. Mister Louis Morse stood up. His coin dispensing device jingled at that time, so I gazed at it. What Is That For, I wondered, but I did not ask him. He said "Your fling lacks point, sir." When he said that, I knew that he was terminating the conversation. I knew it for two reasons. One is this. He turned around and walked away. You know a person is done with you, when some thing of that kind comes about. I do not recall the other reason. On an other hand, I did not know where the water closet was. I was going to ask him, but he said, "I'll tell Henry you've arrived." He did not turn back to say it. I did not see his face when he said it. I saw the back of his head. The hair on that head is curly. That curly hair comes up to two points.

One point is over each of Assistant Professor Louis Morse's ears. At that time, those points were over Mister Louis Morse's ears. They are the same ears, of course. Then, he went around a corner. I could not see his face then. So, I did not see his face. So, I did not ask him.

A fellow came around that corner going in the other direction, so he was coming in my direction. There fore, I could see his particular face. So I saw it. The Eyes Are The Windows Of The Soul. It is a proverb we have in the land of Amazon. I did not see this fellow's particular soul for this reason. The windows of it were covered by his eye glasses, and the lenses in them were thick. His eyes appeared to be painted on those lenses. This fellow's sight was near, or it was far. It was far. I did not know it at that time. I know it at this time, how ever. So, I could not see the windows of his soul. I could not see through them, either. So, I could not see his soul. So, I did not see it.

This fellow walked to where I was in the parlor. I was sitting on a thread bare couch with some springs that were showing. The fellow's back was a bent back. I did not see his soul's windows, but I saw bags, or pouches, or baggy pouches, under them. They were melancholy bags, or they were tired bags, or they were some other sort. They were not old bags, how ever. This fellow was not old. He was young. He had a long, heavy, black moustache. It was not a middle aged man's salt and pepper black moustache, or an old man's strangely black moustache. It was a moustache like the one on the well known prospector Yosemite Sam, as it seemed to me. So, not only were the windows to his soul out of my sight. His mouth was out of my sight. His back was in no wise bent like an old man's back, either. It was a deep dark sadness of soul's back, or it was a poor posture's back. I did not know which one it was at that time. I do not know it

at this time, either. The fellow leaned over me and nodded at one of the exposed springs. He said, "Watch out. You don't want to take one up the ass."

I said, "Whut?"

He said, "Who are you?" I have not inadvertently skipped a line. This fellow advertently skipped a line, I imagine.

I said, "Do you live here?"

He said, "Who are you?" an other time.

"Wilson? I am expected?" I said.

He said, "We're asking a hundred dollars in cash last Sunday every month."

I said, "So you do live here?" He may have smiled at it, but I could not tell one way or the other. You can not see a smile through a moustache that size. Then he turned his back on me and walked away as Mister Louis Morse had done. It is impressive. It is why they had got the custom of it, I imagine.

I said, "Where is your water closet?" but he did not answer me. He was calling "Henry," as he walked away. He was Mister Joel Mercy. It is how I met that fellow.

Well, How Did You Meet Your Best Friend Mister Henry Shine, you may ask. I am going to tell you. I did not meet him in that house. I all ready knew him, then. He was who told me to come over and see the room, in fact. I met him in a corridor. The corridor was in a building. That corridor is in that building to this very day, I imagine. It is standing there, and it empties people out and fills up with them, and then it empties out again on a fairly regular basis, I imagine. Many corridors do that way. It is clear. They keep going on whiles you go off some where, or I go off some where, for years on in to the future. It is a trail of items we pass through. They disappear from us, but they stick

around, in a manner of speaking. It is interesting. I do not recall which building it was, but it was a building in the New York University, south of Washington Square, on Manhattan, or in Manhattan. Manhattan is an island. The building is on it. Manhattan is a borough. The building is in it. They are all most the same Manhattan. They are not the same Manhattan, but they have the same name. It is a common goddamn predicament. Mister Millard Wilson of Atlanta Georgia said it to me. He was my uncle on my father's side at one time. Mister Millard Wilson was a taxi cab driver until he drove his taxi cab in to a truck of pet food at about one fourteen, post meridiem, on April 11 in the year 1974. The day was a Thursday. The pet food was parakeet food. It was seven tons of millet. It suffocated him. It was a mystical rhyme of fate. After that happened, he was a comatose person for about sixteen months, eleven days, eleven hours, and nine minutes. Then he became a dead person at about twelve twenty three, ante meridiem. The day was a Saturday. We were sitting around his hospital bed watching. He coughed up a few seeds. Then he turned purple. Then, he ceased being a comatose person or any other sort of person. When Mister Millard Wilson was still a taxi cab driver he would say, " One place, two names. One name, two places. It's a common goddamn predicament." Then he would say, "Try earning your bread driving a taxi, Doctor Fancy Pants. "

It is what he called me, but my pants are not fancy. I am looking at them. They are dungarees. Further more, I am not a doctor. I departed the Amazon State College with out completing my dissertation A line or two about linear operators on nonlinear operators on linear operators, a thesis in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of doctor of philosophy, unfortunately. There fore, I did not fulfill partially the

said requirements. There fore, I did not fulfill them fully. There fore, I am not a doctor of philosophy. I am not a doctor of any thing.

Well, I am here in the land of Arctica, where as my former uncle Mister Millard Wilson is not any where. The sun shines out side my window. I have remained on the earth. I have not suffocated or had a coma, and so on. It is nearly beautiful today. The snow on the tree branches beyond my bobbed wire is bright and white. Not all is with out joy or pleasure, is what I am saying to you. You can not choose your uncles. There is no use to trouble your self about it. I am not troubling my particular self about it. I have other troubles. This is my example. Snow.

Here is my main track again. We are going back to the past on it. It is the year 1969. That is my freshman year at the New York University. It should have been my junior year or my senior year, except, I had some trouble back there in Red Hand Land, in the greater land of Amazon, that delayed my matriculation. What sort of trouble, you may want to know. I am not going to tell you. It is not part of my confessions. It is part of some one else's confessions. The day is the nineteenth day of August. It is ten days prior to when I met those other fellows, of course. It is about three fifty one, post meridiem. The day is a Wednesday. It is the corridor again. I am coming out of a class room. Mister Henry Shine has all so come out of the class room. He has come out ahead of me, and he wants to talk to me about the well known Pascal's Wager. I am switching from the historical present tense on over to the ordinary present tense at this time. I am just saying. By The Well Known Pascal's Wager, I do not mean the wager of the well known Pascal. I mean the well known wager of Pascal. It is the very same Pascal, how ever. This wager is a type of philosophical item called An Argument. It is not an every

day argument. You are not fighting in this argument. You are thinking in this argument. A wager is in this particular argument. It is an ordinary every day wager about God, if God exists. If God does not exist, it is a wager about some thing else. Do not ask me what. I do not know. Now, I am changing from the ordinary present tense back on over to the historical present tense. I am just saying, an other time. I do not know Mister Henry Shine. He is not well known by me. We have been disagreeing about this wager in the room we have left.

He says, "The old man was really mired in a swamp of ambiguities in there. Why did you raise your hand?" whiles his eyes are looking over my dowdy dungarees and my dowdy often laundered white office wear shirt, which it is buttoned to the top button but there is no tie on, or, rather, I have no tie on.

"I was not convinced," I say, whiles my eyes rove over his nice new dungarees and his nice leather boots and his nice leather belt with a shiny brass buckle on it and his blue work shirt. I know it is called a Work Shirt at that time, but I have not seen a worker wearing one. I have only seen some other students with their aviator sunglasses and nice boots and so on wearing one.

"You know I'm the T. A.," he says.

"I know it," I say. "Should I believe it then?" I say.

" 'course not," he says. "That'd be an argument from authority," he says.

I say, "So?"

"You're not allowed to accept that kind of argument," he says. Then he says, "Take it from me," and he wiggles his eye brows up and down, and he taps the invisible ash off the tip of his invisible cigar.

It is how I surmise that it is a jest, so I say, "Is it a jest?" Mister Henry Shine looks me up and down another time. "Well, why should I believe it, then?" I say.

"Come on," he says. "Why not believe it?"

"We are mired in a swamp of ambiguity," I say.

"Very funny," he says.

"Believe in God, or believe in Pascal's Wager about God?" I say.

"God, man," he says.

I say, "You can not choose what you believe. You might as well say you can choose what you feel."

"So?" he says to me.

"So what?" I say to him.

"So, can't you?" he says to me.

I think, You Better Think About This. It is an easy question. The answer is No, of course. I ask myself, Then Why Is He Asking Me? I look at Mister Henry Shine leaning against the wall of the corridor. It is a green wall. He is carrying a green book bag. He has spent the summer in Harvard University, but I do not know it at that time. Later, I do know it, of course. I am telling you, therefore, I know it. The book bags are green in Harvard University. He has one. He is carrying it. His shirt is that blue work shirt. He has large eyes and a large nose and long, curly hair. He is a tall fellow with a thin dimension and a wide dimension. He is thin back to front. He is wide right to left. He is all so wide left to right. It is a jest. He has a foot against the wall. He has his hands on his hips. His head is cocked to one side. It is a gesture which seems to me to

mean, You can not be such a fool as you sound, can you? It is why I am hesitating to say No.

A dark haired woman is listening. She was in the room with us. Now she is in the corridor with us. She is wearing a peasant skirt with flower pictures on it, and a peasant blouse with out any pictures on it. It is white and lacy and her hair is done up, or what ever is the past participle of what ever is the verb a woman might use, in tight circles of braids that show her ears. Her hair is a beautiful, shining, glowing, ebony color. She is some what thin in her dimensions to suit the word Beautiful in the rest of her features, perhaps. Her eyes are beautiful, perhaps. They are dark brown eyes. I will admit it. They are beautiful eyes. I am reluctant to say it. I liked her all right for a while, how ever. Later on, I was embarrassed by some deeds I did, which, she saw me do them. Her name is Miss Sarah Ohm. You feel just terribly pained when you act like a fool and you happen to know it. Later on, when you run in to some one, who saw you act that way, and knew it as well as you did, why, you feel pained all over again. So I feel pained when I run in to Miss Sarah Ohm. So I am not free with generous words for her. It is not her fault. It is my fault.

When I was acting a fool, it was some time after that August in the year 1969. I will be more precise. It was some time after Christmas Evening in the year 1970. Here is how I know it. I was in a crush on a Belgian au pair girl on that evening. I was not yet in love with Miss Miriam Ohm on that evening. Miss Miriam Ohm is some one I was in love with eventually, how ever. She is the sister of Miss Sarah Ohm. She is the younger sister. Here is an other way to put it. Miss Miriam Ohm is younger than Miss Sarah Ohm. I did not act a fool on Christmas Evening. That was an evening on which our

house mate Monsieur Jean-Marie l'Acombe acted a fool. He ruined the Christmas dinner. It is not a foolish deed, necessarily, but, if you tell the two au pair girls you have picked up in the church on Fifth Avenue while listening to the Christmas carols at mid night to keep your self and my self company on Christmas Evening what a fine cook and gourmet you are, and so on and so forth, and they are tall Belgian girls with fine long golden curls and cheerful pink cheeks and dancing blue eyes, in the conventional manner of speaking on such descriptive occasions, and then it is when you find your self spilling the greased smoking turkey off the hot plate on down to the kitchen floor, where you then get on to your hands and your knees in your white chef's apron and tall chef's hat with the big hot mitts on your hands so you can not pick any thing up any way, and you find your self hooting in some sort of Parisian manner down there, which sounds more than faintly ridiculous—why, then you have acted a fool, in my opinion. Our house mate, Monsieur Jean-Marie l'Acombe, did all that. It is fortunate that Mister Louis Morse and Mister Henry Shine were not witnesses, in my opinion. They are both professional chefs in their spare time. They are paid money. Monsieur Jean-Marie l'Acombe has never been paid a centime or a thin U.S. dime to cook any thing. Here is one last item along this line. One day, I watched Monsieur Jean-Marie l'Acombe pour his corn flakes from a corn flake box on to his flat dish. That dish did not hold water. It did not hold milk either, but Monsieur Jean-Marie l'Acombe poured his milk on to it any way. I did not speak up or shout out for this reason. I could not believe it. At that time, Monsieur Jean-Marie l'Acombe made some more of his Parisian sounds. He was not familiar with corn flake boxes, I imagine, but flat is the same in France as it is in Manhattan. So is convex. I am done with Monsieur Jean-Marie l'Acombe at this time. It is how he acted a fool. The way I did it

was, I fell in love with Miss Miriam Ohm. It is all right, if you do it, and then she laughs off your importunate advances. But do not do it the other way around. Do not let it be that she laughs off your importunate advances, then you fall in love with her. It is a fool's action. It was my action.

Miss Miriam Ohm lived with her sister. She was studying medieval matters at the afore mentioned Columbia University. Miss Sarah Ohm was the beloved person of Mister Henry Shine at that time. She had admired his side of the Pascal's Wager, perhaps, or she had admired some other side of him. She and I and he went to the movies often when we were at the New York University. I was the third wheel. "You know, Willy, you're something of a third wheel," she would say to me. That is not even a hint. It is a brusque, or mean, or cruel observation, I should say. I did not take it, what ever it was, for this reason. Mister Henry Shine kept asking me to come along. When I was a student at the New York University, I had some money. Then, I had no money. Then, I was a pedlar. I was peddling pop corn in Washington Square Park. It had no money in it either. Then I cooked some hot dogs and scooped a little ice cream. I did not make much money that way either. I rode a bicycle to Times Square every day and worked in a subway station hot dog stand there. One day, in comes Miss Sarah Ohm and a pretty girl, and they order up ice cream cones from me. This girl was one mite or so shorter than Miss Sarah Ohm. As compared with Miss Sarah Ohm, her eyes were larger and her nose was larger and her legs were longer. As compared with Miss Sarah Ohm, there was more leg to her and less thorax to her, I should say. After that, it transpired that she was who she was, of course. She was Miss Miriam Ohm. I thought about it. Mister Henry Shine had her sister's number. So I telephoned her. Then, she laughed. I did not like it, but I

importuned her several more times. She laughed and snorted and so on. I am not going to provide any details. You would not provide them to me if it was the other way around. So, I will not do it either. I will just tell you that I fell in love with her. I was a fool.

I Am A Fool. I was saying it. I was in a hall way in Perry Street one day, pacing in one direction. Then, I was pacing in the other direction. Mister Louis Morse was at the other end of the very same hall way. He was looking at me with a particular look. This look was blood shot and blank and complicated. It was blood shot for a particular reason. I will not tell you the reason at this particular time, but I will tell you it soon. It was a blank look for this reason. There were no thoughts showing in it. It was complicated for this reason. There was thinking showing in it.

He said, "Say, 'I'm so over you, Miriam Ohm.' Say it three times, close your eyes, hop on one foot, and blow. Shazaam, you're over it. Just get over it."

I said, "Louis, you ever hurt so bad, you can not even cry?"

"Oh sure," he said.

"What do you do about it?" I said.

Mister Louis Morse went in to the kitchen. Then, he came out again. He was grinning his faux blood shot eyes grin and holding up his bottle of Beef Eater's Gin.

"That will not help me," I said.

"Never know until you try, sir," he said.

"Never helps you, that I could tell," I said back.

"Oh, don't be so sure," he said to me. "What about the time I put my hand on your knee and you took it off again?" he said.

"I am serious, Louis," I said.

His eyes went wide in a flash. His eye brows knitted. Those are dark, thick eye brows. When he has knit his eye brows, then he curls his lips. "Well I am too, young man," he said to me, and he turned his back to me as he was wont to do, and he left me alone. So, I felt alone.

It is the way I acted a fool. Miss Sarah Ohm knew all about it, of course. Her sister Miss Miriam Ohm told her all about it, or Mister Henry Shine told her all about it. He all so found me pacing in the hall way of Perry Street now and then. So I am reminded that I was such a fool as I was when I see Miss Sarah Ohm, which, I often did see her, back in Manhattan, and down there in Gum. It is why I am not generous to her in my mind. I am not generous in my mind to Miss Miriam Ohm either, but I do not see her. I have not seen her in a long while. She is a United States Attorney now. In general, I do not see those attorneys. I have merely mentioned her in a passing manner. It was to explain why I did not admit to Miss Sarah Ohm's beauty on the day we were disputing upon Pascal's Wager. That Wager tells you whether it is, or it is not, a good bet to believe that there is a God. It tells you that the answer is, It Is. That answer was, or is, Pascal's opinion.

I know it is more pertinent to your interests to know if there is a God, than to know my particular tale, of course. One of them is pertinent. The other one is not. One of them is over and done with. All I have left to do is to consider that tale, whiles I look at the snow out side my bobbed wire window. I am rolling it around my mind, much like the wax ball and so on. The other one of them goes on and on. It is not done with, now, or ever thus. It remains after all the snow has gone. It sticks better. How ever, I am telling you my tale. You are looking at it. God is not in it, or He is. Or She is, or It is. I

do not know. If you need some advice on that matter, I can not help you. I am sorry for it. It is an other track. Consequently, we will have no more about Pascal's Wager in here.

Chapter 4

Why Assistant Professor Louis Morse has blood shot eyes.

Now I am going to tell you the reason that Assistant Professor Louis Morse has his blood shot eyes. Most of the time that I knew him, Assistant Professor Louis Morse preferred the company of young men for his amatory diversions. It was evident. The evidence is this. When we lived in the house that we lived in, back there in Gum, after Assistant Professor Henry Shine and Assistant Professor Louis Morse cooked the supper, then, they and any one else who was around at that time would eat it. I would have some, and Assistant Professor Louis Morse would have some, and so would Assistant Professor Henry Shine, for an example. Then we would do a variety of actions. What Assistant Professor Louis Morse did was this. He went out. Then, I and Assistant Professor Henry Shine and did our various items. Then, about at one or two or three in the morning, Assistant Professor Louis Morse would come back in, and some times, he brought home a young man with him. Then, he would spend the night shut up in his bed room with his young man. Then, in the morning, the two of them would lounge around whiles I had my breakfast. They would be wearing two silk robes. These were silvery thin silk robes that came down just to their knees, with Chinese dragons weaved on them in threads of several colors. Or, if he did not bring home a young man with him, then Assistant Professor Louis Morse would be glum. Glum in Gum. He would sit at the marble cutting table we had in the kitchen and snap on the neon light. Assistant Professor Louis

Morse liked the neon light when he was glum. He would tell us the story about some Georgette, or Tomasina, or other person who had not been inclined to come home with him. Then, out comes the gin, a tall square bottle with a cheerful fellow in a ruff collar on it. Mister Louis Morse's eyes were blood shot more than was their custom, from some other gin that he had quaffed in some local establishment of the evening. That is to say, his eyes were accustomed to be blood shot before he went out, before he came back again, and not from gin. It was for this reason. Mister Louis Morse is, or was, the victim of a mythical condition, depending. Depending On What, you may ask. Depending on this. Is he living, or is he not living. I do not know. I can not find him on the Internet. I can not find him any where.

"Louis, why are your eyes so red all the time?" It is what I asked him at one time of that particular sort.

"I am the victim of a mythical condition," was his reply at that particular time.

"No kidding," I said to him.

"Indeed," he said back to me.

"Whut is it?" I said.

Assistant Professor Louis Morse made as if to heave a tragic sigh, but he is too short statured and barrel chested for a tragedy. He swelled up a little. Then he wheezed out a little, he rubbed his eyes a little, and he said, "I don't sleep."

I said, "You sleep poorly?"

"I sleep neverly," he said.

"Really," I said. "How can it be?" I said.

Assistant Professor Louis Morse brought his top eye lids down half way at that time. I could tell he was trying to look in to my pupils, but he did not manage to do it. His own pupils were filmed over, it seemed to me, and they kept missing and bouncing off when he aimed his pupils at mine. His head swayed this way, then it went swaying the other way. He was sitting on a tall bar stool with red leatherette skin on the seat of it and rusty steel studs tacked all around that seat. I was sitting on an other bar stool of a similar kind next to the one that he was sitting on. Those bar stools were in our kitchen. They were stolen. I will not say who stole them. If you run in to me, please do not ask me.

Assistant Professor Louis Morse said, "The minor god Antimorpheus—have you heard of him, Willy?—is said one day to have annoyed Diana the Huntress, who was, of course, much his superior in greatness and power, by falling asleep while standing guard over her closet of weapons. The cherub Eros, a very mischievous young sot (that has one tee, Willy), swiped Diana's bow and her quiver of arrows from under his snoring nose. You may surmise what, in her rage, Diana did to punish Antimorpheus."

"I guess she made him sleep forever, like Sleeping Beauty," I said.

"You guess incorrectly. What kind of vengeance would that be?" Assistant Professor Louis Morse said.

"She might give him some night mares," I said.

"Indeed," Mister Louis Morse said.

"Whut were those night mares?" I said.

"Everything," Mister Louis Morse said to me.

"Whut," I said.

Assistant Professor Louis Morse looked out the little office window. We were in his office, which had one of those, of course. He said, "Clouds. Grass. People in the rain. Kids with Frisbees. Dogs. Cats. Pigeons in parks. Sparrows and robins. Seagulls over white sands, hovering. Waves. Sunlight on the waves. The sky...."

"They did not have Frisbees then, did they Louis?" I said. It is repartee.

"The torments of the gods go on forever," he said, and he stared at me with his blood shot eyes.

"It is a lot of night mares," I said.

"Good fellow. The gods are cleverer than you or I. Their methods are elegant," Assistant Professor Louis Morse said. He leaned across his desk, tapped his fore head and showed his bucky teeth inside their red lips, while his eyebrows drifted up in delight.

I said, "Uh huh," for this reason. I did not know what else to say.

"Don't you see?" he said.

"You better tell me," I said back to him.

Assistant Professor Louis Morse said, "Everything Antimorpheus saw was a nightmare, because Antimorpheus never slept. Athena simply blinked at him, you see, or wiggled her nose, perhaps, and the unhappy fellow never slept again. He longed for darkness, for blankness, for silence. For peace. He longed for dreamless sleep. Whatever he saw in his terrible wakefulness became his dream. His nightmare."

"Why did he not take some morphine?" I said. It is badinage.

"Medicine and mythical conditions are inconsonant," Mister Louis Morse said.

"You do not ever sleep," I said.

"I do not," he said.

"I can not see it," I said.

"I can't either," he said.

"You would die," I said.

"I'm waiting," Mister Louis Morse said.

"That is the reason you have your blood shot eyes?" I said.

"My kids think it's the sauce," he said. Mister Louis Morse often called his students Kids. "I've had some unpleasantness about it," he said. "Lovely example of a Gettier mistake. Tee hee," he said. He did not make the sound Tee Hee. He uttered the words Tee Hee.

"That is awe full," I said.

Assistant Professor Louis Morse beckoned me. His hand was or is a chubby one, with five clean, short finger nails on it. I leaned over his desk towards him.

"This is strictly *entre nous*," he said. "I asked Joel to do something for me," he whispered.

"Whut?" I said.

He said, "I asked him to keep a mouse awake in its cage. Never to permit it to sleep."

Assistant Professor Joel Mercy was an assistant professor of the science of biology at that time. He studied mouse pain in particular. All so, he studied it in general. There fore, he had several caged mice to torment in any way that he saw fit.

"You did?" I said.

"Yes, I did," Assistant Professor Louis Morse said.

"That is terrible," I said.

He said, "I feel just awful about it every day."

"How could he?" I said.

"Oh, noise. Shocks. Cold water, and so on," Assistant Professor Louis Morse said.

"That is not what I mean, Louis," I said.

"Ahh well," he said. He leaned forward. "You'll never guess what happened," he said.

"Whut?" I said.

Assistant Professor Louis Morse said, "His lackey slipped up. Rather like Antimorpheus, in a way. Slipped off for a wee wee. When she came back, mousey had given her the slip."

"That is too bad," I said. How ever, I thought, Good For That Mouse, of course.

"Did they ever find it?" I said.

"Mousey was gone. Vanished like the dew. Like your favorite empire. Like the bloom of youth," he said.

"Whut are you saying, Louis?" I asked, but he did not tell me.

Later on in the morning, after he wished his young man a good day, if he was lucky, or moped in the kitchen with his Beefeaters Gin, for that is the brand name of it, a while if he was not lucky, Assistant Professor Louis Morse would go off to teach his God 101 class. It is an other God. He still had his blood shot eyes. He all ways had them, for this reason. He could not leave them any where.

Chapter 5

Crow Hollow.

Now, I am going back to the year 1975. I do not intend to tell you about January or February and so on. I will not tell you some matters of how I lived in the house that my Assistant Professor Louis Morse was renting at that time. I do not intend to tell you about how he cooked the meals and I washed the dishes and we debated about John Keats at the dinner table and so on, or how I commenced my graduate studies in Amazon, or how I commenced my teaching endeavors, or how I desisted from those endeavors at the end of May, for this reason. Amazon State College does not pay you in the summer time. It was not explained to me before I came down there, but it is the same at most similar places, I find. Consequently, I might have come down any way.

I do not intend to tell you about my job from June to August in the Kool Kone Ice Kreem Emporium. It is an ice cream emporium, of course. It is in the Small Mall, which is a small mall south west of the Grand Kleagle Memorial Parkway in west Gum. It is next door to the Blue Parrot Night Club. It is a night club, of course. I did not have to get on a bus to get to the Kool Kone Ice Creem Emporium. I only had to walk a mile, or ride on a bicycle a mile. I usually rode on a bicycle. It was a red Schwinn Phantom Cruiser bicycle, complete with the original fender light and the original chrome fenders. I purchased it at a yard sale down the block from Assistant Professor Louis Morse's rental house in excellent condition. The rental house was not in excellent condition. The

Schwinn Phantom Cruiser was in excellent condition. I have not told you where this rental house was located, precisely, especially in its relation to the other locations, such as the campus of Amazon State College. I am leaving the enumerated items out of account for this reason. It is not in the tale. It is the tale of my various misdeeds with or near, or on account of my love for my beloved person, who was Miss Lula at that time. I did not commit any misdeeds to speak of in the Small Mall, or in Assistant Professor Louis Morse's rental house, and so on. I started committing them, to speak of, in the month of August.

August was when we picked up Doctor Joel Mercy, Doctor Sarah Ohm, and Doctor Henry Shine at the Gum City Airport. Doctor Joel Mercy and Doctor Henry Shine were Assistant Professor Louis Morse's transplants, as I have told you. Doctor Sarah Ohm was not his transplant. She was Doctor Henry Shine's beloved person, as I have all so told you. It did not last. I will tell you why when the time comes. This is not it. Assistant Professor Louis Morse, Miss Lula, Miss Lula's child, who is Master Joshua Oleander, and my self were in a large rental car, for this reason. We might have left home several people, but they all wanted to come along. Four or five people can fit in to Pegasus the Volkswagen automobile at one time, but no more than four or five people can fit in to Pegasus the Volkswagen automobile at any time. So we came up to the airport in that rental car. We had an other reason for coming in a rental car. It was this. Mister Joel Mercy was not sure he wished to live with the rest of us, so he asked us to rent the rental car for him, but he did come to live with us after all.

We parked the rental car in the parking lane next to the door where you go to pick up people, but we did not go pick up the people. They were all ready standing at the door

with their suitcases and their valises and the like, and they were blinking a good deal. You will blink that way if you have just flown down from New York State. There is more light in the land of Amazon than there might be in the State of New York on a similar day. So, they were blinking. Doctor Henry Shine was leaning over Doctor Joel Mercy detailing a jest of some kind. When he details a jest, his eye brows go up and down, so you know it, even if you do not hear it. I was in the air conditioned automobile. The windows were shut. So I could not hear it. So, I did not hear it. I knew it, how ever.

Doctor Joel Mercy was not smiling at that jest of Doctor Henry Shine. It was not funny, perhaps. Doctor Sarah Ohm was not smiling at the jest. She was not listening to it. She was smiling at Assistant Professor Louis Morse, how ever. She was waving at him as well. Assistant Professor Louis Morse did his smile back at her. It is an other smile he has. It is not his faux grin. It is an other grin with tension in it. It is tense around his eyes. My friend Assistant Professor Louis Morse was tense at the time, I would say.

When we all pulled up to the curb and opened up the door, I got out and piled every body's suitcases and valises and so forth in to the boot, whiles Assistant Professor Louis Morse introduced any persons who were in need of that process, pair wise. He did not introduce Master Joshua Oleander to any one or do the reverse procedure, for this reason. Master Joshua Oleander was tucking his head in to his mother's arm. You could not see his face, so you would not know to whom you were getting your self introduced, even if he were to be introduced to you. So Assistant Professor Louis Morse did not do it to any one.

He did introduce Miss Lula to Doctor Sarah Ohm and Doctor Joel Mercy, how ever. This is the way he did it. He said, "Sara, Joel – Lula. She is my wonderful new friend. Lula, these are my wonderful colleagues."

He did not introduce my friend Doctor Henry Shine to Miss Lula. Those two met on the occasion in which Doctor Henry Shine had picked up on Assistant Professor Louis Morse's gold watch and gold fob wearing custom. I have mentioned it. Doctor Henry Shine was wearing his gold watch and gold fob at the present time, which was eleven seven ante meridiem or so on the twenty fourth day in August. That day was a Sunday. You could not see his watch. It was in the fob pocket of his blue denim jeans. How ever, you could see his gold fob, of course.

Miss Lula noticed it. "Why, Henry," she said. "That's a beautiful chain. It's just like Louis's."

Doctor Joel Mercy said, "The Fobsey Twins."

"How are you?" Doctor Sarah Ohm said to me. I was getting in to the car again.

"Fine how 'bout you?" I said back to her. It is what I all ways say.

"Unemployed," she said back to me.

"How long you staying, dear?" Miss Lula said to Miss Sarah Ohm.

Doctor Joel Mercy got in the way of that conversation. "You got any real estate places open here on Sundays?" he said.

"Sunday's the big day," Assistant Professor Louis Morse said.

"Can we go now?" Doctor Joel Mercy said.

"We can if you'd like to, of course," Assistant Professor Louis Morse said.

"With out even dealing with the stuff?" Doctor Sarah Ohm said.

"I have to go," Doctor Henry Shine said.

"I bet they've got a place for that at the real estate," Doctor Joel Mercy said.

"My, what a handsome moustache, if I do say so," Miss Lula said. She said it to Doctor Joel Mercy. She knew the other moustache that was in that car all ready, which was Assistant Professor Louis Morse's moustache, of course.

Doctor Joel Mercy was sitting in the shotgun seat. That seat was directly in front of Miss Lula's seat. Consequently, her seat was directly behind his seat, of course. She was looking at him in the driver's mirror. He looked back at her in the very same mirror. "Why thank you," he said in a certain soft way that you can imagine, I imagine.

"She is trying to make me jealous," Assistant Professor Louis Morse said.

"Well, are you?" Miss Lula said. Then she laughed. Her laugh is quite extraordinary, in my opinion. I had heard it often before, of course, but Doctor Joel Mercy, had not heard it at all, of course. You could see his surprise. Here is the way her laugh goes. It is deep and hearty. It is complicated, in a manner of speaking. It is brim full with affection, but it is derisive, or some times it is derisive, but it is never without affection, it seems to me. It is the laugh of an intelligent, worldly person, it seems to me. It is the laugh of a kind person, it seems to me. Miss Lula is kind when she is derisive. She is not unkind ever, in my opinion. I am biased.

"You biased, Willy." She said it to me on the stoop of her house one time. It was the time I declared my self. I was showering her with praise at the time. "Showering me with all that praise, you are embarrassing me," she said. I will tell you about it. I will not tell you now. I will tell you later.

After all the bags and valises and so on were in the boot, and the rental car was on its way down town, Doctor Sarah Ohm said to me, "What have you been doing all summer?"

I said "Push-ups."

"Why?" she said to me.

"Just keeping busy," I said.

"With push-ups?" she said. "I never thought you were the type," she said.

"When you're broke, there's not much to do," I said.

"You too," she said.

"He has several other pastimes," Assistant Professor Louis Morse said. "He makes chocolate ice cream sundaes for the minimum wage on alternate weekdays," he said.

"It is why I am broke," I said.

"And he watches television all day long. The boy is obsessed," he said.

"Really?" Doctor Sarah Ohm said. "What with?" she said.

"There's one," Doctor Joel Mercy said. He was pointing out the window at a sign, which said: "Hepplesworth Realty & College of Social Dancing".

"Evangelists," I said.

"Evangelists," Doctor Sarah Ohm said. She stared at me.

"Don't worry," I said.

"Pull in Louis, will you?" Doctor Joel Mercy said.

"It is not religious," I said.

Assistant Professor Louis Morse pulled in to the drive way of the Hepplesworth Realty & College of Social Dancing company. It was a brown brick bungalow with a white roof, a white door, and white wooden window frames. A man in the door way was smiling at us. He was wearing a straw brim purple hat, a checkered blue and white sports jacket, black pants and white loafers. His neck was red. He was a red neck. You could see it. He was well groomed. You could see that too. I am a red neck my self. I am not very well groomed in the general course of matters. I am poorly groomed in the general course of matters, but I was fairly well groomed on that particular day, as it happened. We all were. My neck is not red, how ever. It is pale. I am pale all over.

Doctor Joel Mercy got out of the rental car. He waved at the well groomed, red necked fellow. "You open?" Doctor Joel Mercy said.

"It is just a morbid fascination," I said.

The fellow waved at Doctor Joel Mercy too. "What can I do you for?" he said. "Housing or dancing?"

"They go on about the blood of Christ," I said.

Doctor Joel Mercy winked at the fellow and shuffled his feet. "Maybe a little of each," he said. "Housing first," he said.

"They go on and on about it," I said.

The well groomed fellow did a bob and a weave, and he skipped towards us with his hands in his pockets and his hat brim tilted to cover his eyes.

"He reminds me of Fred Astaire," Assistant Professor Louis Morse said.

I said, "Really?"

"No," Assistant Professor Louis Morse said.

"I am on the rug in Louis's parlor," I said.

The fellow shook Doctor Joel Mercy's hand. He said, "Billy Hepplesworth." He turned on the ball of one foot while his right hand tipped his hat brim. When that was over, he leaned in at the window.

"He has got this portable tee vee on the rug," I said.

Assistant Professor Louis Morse stretched over and rolled the window down.

"How do," he said.

"I am on the floor, next to the tee vee, doing my push-ups," I said.

"How do," the fellow said. "Billy Hepplesworth. Some people call me Billy Goat, I don't know why." The truth is, he said Aa Doan No Whaa. It is a phonetic truth. It is not a semantic truth. Then, he brayed as a billy goat might do it. Then, he said, "What you people looking for?" as a semantic truth. He said a different matter as a phonetic truth, how ever.

"I am counting and huffing, 'One-huh, two-huh' and so on," I said.

"Couple of houses," Assistant Professor Louis Morse said.

"Just one house," Doctor Joel Mercy said. Assistant Professor Louis Morse's eye brows went up.

I said, "And the fellow on the tee vee is beating his chest, which, it is in a three-piece suit."

Doctor Joel Mercy put his face up to the window just by Mister Billy Hepplesworth's face. That face did not have any moustache on it, but it did have eye glasses on it. They were silver wire rims. The lenses in them were not thick. You could see the windows of his soul, as I imagine, but I did not dwell on his particular soul. I

dwelled on his skin. It was wrinkled chicken skin on his throat. It was peeling, psoriatic, red skin under his nose. It was plain well groomed skin on his other parts. My own father had peeling, psoriatic skin under his nose at that time. He does not have any skin at all at this time, I imagine. It is a jest. It is why I was dwelling on Mister Billy Hepplesworth's skin.

"How much house?" Mister Billy Hepplesworth.

" 'bout four bedrooms" Assistant Professor Louis Morse said. He looked at Doctor Joel Mercy, and that fellow nodded.

At that time, I ceased to dwell upon that fellow's chicken skin. I said, "He is screaming about the blood of Christ. 'The blood!' he is screaming. Whiles I'm a huffing and a counting."

Mister Billy Hepplesworth looked us all over with an appraising eye, as it seemed to me. "Renting, I guess?"

"'The blood,' he goes. 'A three, huh,' I go. 'The blood,' he goes. 'A four, huh,' I go," I said.

"Yes sir," Assistant Professor Louis Morse said.

Doctor Sarah Ohm was studying the look in my eye, as it seemed to me. "I see what you mean," she said.

"You people all gainfully employed, I'm sure?" this Mister Billy Hepplesworth fellow said.

Doctor Henry Shine said, "Some of us are gainfully employed, and the rest of us are painfully employed."

Assistant Professor Louis Morse swiftly made a serious expression, or an angry expression, appear upon his face. He turned his towards Doctor Henry Shine at that time.

"It is a morbid fascination," I said.

"Oh yes sir," Assistant Professor Louis Morse said. "Employed with gain. Fully," he said.

"I see that," Doctor Sarah Ohm said. It was how she and I finished up that particular colloquy.

Mister Billy Hepplesworth said, "Hee hee." He did not say the words Hee Hee. He made a noise in his throat which I am indicating by the words Hee Hee. It was his goat laugh, I imagine. "How much you wanting to pay, more or less?" he said.

Doctor Henry Shine said, "Less."

"You boys are funny," Mister Billy Hepplesworth said, but he did not laugh that time. He said "Why don't I take you in my van," but he did not say it that way. He said it more like Whaa Doan Aah Taykuh Yeew Nmaah Veyyyin, or some thing else along that line, or, some other line. It is to remind you. Mister Billy Hepplesworth does not sound like you, with out you happen to be from the western parts of the land of Amazon. I should place his birth near the Valley of the Clouds, in the foot hills of the Spirit Mountains, if I had to. It is cloudy there.

I am done reminding you about phonetic truths for a while. When I go to describe Miss Lula in a merciless mode, I will remind you again. I will do it fairly soon, now. I wrote a poem about her, at a time when I was galled and infuriated. It was shortly before that they got me and threw me in to this prison. In particular, it was shortly after the events in question. I wrote that poem in the city of Zenith, in the land of Minnesota,

where I was at that time. That poem recounts my nights in Gum. There fore, the name of that poem is *Gummian Nights*, just like the name on some of this book you are reading, if you are reading this book. My cell mate Mister Maxwell Mentirosa said, "Don't put in that poem, Willy." I am following his advice. Here is the reason. That poem is no good. There fore, I will not put it in. After I wrote my poem, I mailed her it. I do not recall the day or the hour, but the sun was down. It was snow up to my waist. The mail box was on the corner of Benjamin Franklin Avenue and Chicago Avenue, in the city of Zenith that I have mentioned. They had Lakota people on those avenues, who, they laughed at me on the street now and then. "There goes the moon man," they would say. Any how, one of them said it. It was because of my big boots and my army surplus coat and my coat's hood with a wolf's hair fringe. I wish I had that coat now, some times. They did not wear such coats. They wore blue jeans and red and black plaid shirts and black sneakers and long braids of their own particular hair, which, it was black all so. I am going back to the mail box. It was a blue mail box. They are usually that color, as you know, no doubt. Then, Miss Lula mailed a letter to me. She mailed it on the eleventh day in December in the year 1977, apparently. That date is the date of the post mark on the envelope her letter was in when I received it. It is a thin, pale, blue envelope. It is a thin, pale, blue letter. It is a scented letter. It is a jasmine scent, or some other similar scent. Miss Lula mailed her letter from the fabled land of Asia. I do not know the reason she was in that land at that time. She said this.

Jalalabad

Dear Willy,

You are merciless! You must be so infuriated! I

*hope you feel better soon. Write to me
at General Delivery. Please write to me.*

Love, Lula

I have not written to her at General Delivery, how ever. I have not written to her any where. It is an other reason why I am trying this an other time. I am not writing a poem at this time. I have done with poetry. It is a singing mode, in some sort. I am no longer in such sort. I am in a mode of speaking at this particular time. I am not infuriated at this particular time. I have bethought my self, but I am remaining in the merciless mode of speaking, as it may be, for this reason. What is mercy? Is it to draw a veil across the pain full matters? In such a mode, ought I write about those matters? I ought not write it in those occasions. But I must write it, apparently. Consequently, I am remaining in the merciless mode, as it may be.

At this time, I am going back to Mister Billy Hepplesworth and so forth. When once he said his Why Don't I Take You In My Van, or he said some other, semantically equivalent, sounds, why, then we got in to his van. It was a two toned blue and white Volkswagen van, so Mister Billy Hepplesworth and Assistant Professor Louis Morse had much in common, evidently. So Assistant Professor Louis Morse said, "We have much in common, evidently."

Mister Billy Hepplesworth turned his head around. It was in the driving seat with the rest of him. I imagine that he was going to say some thing along the line of Why Thank 'ee Much or, What May That Be, or some other thing along that line, or along an other line, perhaps, but he did not say it, or, he did not say some other item in his mind at that time. It is my surmise, for this reason. He began to stare at, and examine the back of

the head of, Master Joshua Oleander. It was only visible part of him at that time. The rest of him was pressed up against his mother. Mister Billy Hepplesworth did his examination, and so on, for an extended period while his erst while sales man smile spread and widened across his face. It became more friendly and happier by the moment. "Why, isn't that a pretty head of hair on that child," he said, or he said some semantically equivalent sounds.

Miss Lula said, "Thank 'ee." It is more or less what she said. What she said in truth was closer to this. Thayuhnkee. It is a way of speaking from the Boney Banks. Miss Lula comes out of those parts. I have mentioned them.

"Is he a boy or is he a girl?" Mister Billy Hepplesworth said. Master Joshua Oleander shook him self vigorously at that question, and Mister Billy Hepplesworth laughed at him. "Oh, he must be a girl," he said.

Master Joshua Oleander clenched his fists. He made a loud sound at that time. It was an indistinct sound. His face was muffled in his mother's side, of course. It was a sound such as Yak, perhaps.

"He is the most boy there is," Miss Lula said.

"Oh no," Mister Billy Hepplesworth said. "Is that a boy? My oh my," he said.

"He surely is," Miss Lula said.

"Oh it can't be," Mister Billy Hepplesworth said. "Boys is not shy that way. Girls is shy that way. Has to be one," he said.

Master Joshua Oleander went stiff and straight and filled his lungs and shouted in to his mother's breast a muffled sound. It was, Boy. I am certain. After that, every once

in a while Mister Billy Hepplesworth would speak that way. Girl, he would say.

Whence, Master Joshua Oleander would shout Boy. I am certain, but it was not distinct.

Came a moment when Miss Lula said to me in her low voice, so no one else could hear it, "You staring at me." I am going to tell you how she looked to me at that time. She had blond hair, of course. It was long, and it had brown streaks in it. It was like metal with shadows. I would say, it gleamed. Her blond hair was up on her face in a swirling way. I will tell you some thing about Miss Lula's hair. It goes nicely with her eyes. She has blue eyes that make your heart skip. They do it if you are me, any way. I do not know why my heart does that. I look at her eyes straight on, and it skips. It skips if I look at them straight on. It skips if I see her black pupils in the center of her blue eyes looking back at me. It skips when her pupils look at my pupils. I can tell when my pupils get looked in to by her pupils in that way. She has spirit hands, I should say. Her spirit hands come right out of her black pupils, and they come on through the air that is between her and me. Her spirit hands reach down through my black pupils, they reach down, and they grasp my heart. That is when it skips.

At other times, such as the morning I saw her the first time, I do not look at Miss Lula's eyes straight on. My heart does not skip at such times. An example is when I was staring at her in Mister Billy Hepplesworth's van. It is the glory of her. It is too much for a man. I was afraid. You might ask, What Were You Afraid Of, Willy Wilson? Miss Lula has a gift to see ahead of time, behind time, in the back of the mind, around the corner, and beyond the seasons. That is second sight. You would say that is enough, I imagine. It is not the end of it. I do not know the end of it, but I know an other part of it.

When you are in a room with her at a certain time, or even if you are just in a van with her at such a time, you see what she sees. She does not let on about it. There is no need.

It was wonder full how much I learned about Miss Lula when I was staring at her for those few seconds. That is how long she laughed at Assistant Professor Louis Morse, as I reckoned. It was complicated laughter. You could hear how it was going between the two of them in the sound of it. You could hear how it went all along between them for a year or two, in a matter of fact. You could hear how well she liked him, and you could hear how well he liked her in return. It is a puzzle for this reason. Assistant Professor Louis Morse was not making any sounds of his own at this time. I felt a communication whiles I stared at her. It is the adequate phrase. Miss Lula did not send a glance in my direction, but she was aware of it in some way. I did not wish her pupils in the middle of her blue eyes to look in to my pupils in my eyes. My own particular eyes have two colors. If you count the color of pupils, they have three. First, there are the black pupils at their centers, of course. Then there are two green annuli, one apiece. Then there are two brown annuli. If you count the whites of their eyes, then my eyes have four colors. Miss Lula's eyes have just the one color, unless you count the black color of her pupils, or the color of the whites of her eyes. Then her eyes have three colors. The one color is the clearest blue. Her eyes did not look in to my eyes. I did not wish it. I feel that Miss Lula knew about my wish, so she did not look my way. Rather, I looked at her blond hair sweeping her cheek bones. Those are high bones. They make a cliff of sorts in her face. They are glamorous. I looked at her cheek bones, her white fore head, her red lips, and her long gold eye lashes. She has gold eye lashes that curl up. Those are the ones on her top eye lids. Her other gold eye lashes curl down the other

way. I looked at them too. Then I looked at her teeth, which are buck teeth. You might not think that buck teeth are glamorous, but hers are glamorous in deed. They peep out between her red lips. She did not have on any lip stick. She does not require any on those red lips of hers. They are red enough all ready. But she did have on some blue shade on top of her eyes. It was on her top eye lids, of course. I remember it. I believe that I remember all most every thing about her that I ever have seen. What I recall best is the blue of her eyes. They were not looking my way, of course. I was watching her blue eyes from off to the side under my eye brows. I could see sun fire on her contact lenses afloat on them. The blue of Miss Lula's eyes was sitting under those lenses, alight with it. I am done telling you what Miss Lula looks like at this time.

When she said, You staring at me, I said, "No I am not." It was a stretcher, of course. I will say one now and then.

"You take him now," Miss Lula said to me. She lifted Master Joshua Oleander on to my lap. I liked the feeling of him. I liked his weight. I liked his warm body. I liked his warm breath. It was coming and going on my neck, for this reason. His face was on my neck.

Doctor Henry Shine, Doctor Joel Mercy, and Mister Billy Hepplesworth were discussing house rents of the various neighborhoods of Gum, back and forth. Doctor Sarah Ohm was looking out of her window at the green hills and the few trees passing by on the road sides. Every once in a while, Mister Billy Hepplesworth would throw Girl over his shoulder, and Master Joshua Oleander would stiffen up and shudder and say his Ack or his Boy in to my neck. Miss Lula leaned her face next to my ear and spoke to me in her low voice whiles she petted her child.

"Ain't that a pretty moustache," she whispered. She meant Doctor Joel Mercy's moustache. It was evident for the reason I mentioned, namely, she all ready knew about the other moustache in that van. "Ain't it pretty. It is soft, I imagine," Miss Lula whispered. She underlined Soft, in a manner of speaking, but I have not underlined it. "A brand new doctor," Miss Lula said. "Yew can play doctor with me, honey bun," she said. I started when she said it. It startled me.

"I don't mean you when I say You," she said. "I mean him," she said. She meant Doctor Joel Mercy, I am sure. "Tell me all about him," she said, but I did not want to do it. So, I did not do it. I just wagged my head.

Then it was that Mister Billy Hepplesworth said, " 'course, everything's cheaper down to Crow Hollow. Most our darkies live over to there. But we ain't goin' that way, now are we? Hee hee." He did not say the words Hee Hee. I have explained it. Then, no one said any thing. No one said a word. Not a word came out of any one. Mister Billy Hepplesworth listened to the silence a while. You could see he was a sensitive fellow. He was listening sensitively. Then he said, "We got the finest darkies you going to see, right here in Gum." He said, "No big ideas. Give you the sidewalk every time. Crime trouble here is all most nonexistent. They are peaceable and quiet, and they don't bother us at all," he said.

I was wondering why is it called Crow Hollow. So I said, "Why is it called Crow Hollow?"

Mister Billy Hepplesworth frowned. "That is a long story Mister, uh Mister...."

"Willy Wilson," I said.

"Well, Mister Wilson, it's a long story. I'll tell it you sometime. Say, are you related to the Culptown Wilsons?" he said.

It is what you call Changing The Subject if you from down that way. I knew it, but I went along with it, for this reason. Miss Lula was digging her elbow in to my side. She was biting her lip and looking hard at me, so I followed her suggestion, unspoken as it was. I was in a mood to go along with any suggestion she might make to me at that particular time. So I said, "Why, yes. Yes I am. Do you know any Wilsons your self, Mister Hepplesworth?"

"Why yes I do, Willy. May I call you Willy, young sir?" Mister Billy Hepplesworth said.

"Why yes of course, Mister Hepplesworth," I said. " 'course you may. Please do," I said.

"Why don't you call me Billy now, then?" he said.

"Well, don't mind if I do, Billy," I said.

"That's fine, Willy" he said. "That's fine," he said an other time. "Say," he said after he said that second one of his That's Fine's. "Seems I recall you and your family now. Ain't your pap name of John or Joe or Jim or something?"

"It's Jim," I said at that time.

"Ain't he a solicitor?" he said.

"He is in deed," I said.

"Old home week," Doctor Joel Mercy said.

Mister Billy Hepplesworth slapped his knee. He slapped his own knee. He did not slap Doctor Joel Mercy's knee. He might have. They were close enough. There was just a shift stick between them.

"Well, ain't your madray name of Ruth?" Mister Billy Hepplesworth said, then he frowned again. I could see it. He was looking straight at me, I might say. I am saying it. In fact, he was looking around a corner, for he was looking in the driver's rear view mirror, and so was I.

"Why yes," I said. "Yes, it is," I said to him. I was going to say What Of It? or some thing along that line, only politer. But he proceeded to tell me what of it, so, I did not say What Of It?

"Seems to me, it was a mixed marriage, now wasn't it?" is what he said next.

"Yes sir," I said.

"She's in the Hebrew line. Ain't that so? An Israelite?" he said.

"Well sir," I said. "Well, Billy," I said. "Yes and no. She is from down this way," I said.

"That's fine," Mister Billy Hepplesworth said. "It's no matter from a business point of view these days," he said. "We got downright hordes of your Hebrew person here now, yea verily," he said. "Seems half the professors in the world are in that line of blood of yours, young sir," he said. "They all seem to come this way to the school yonder, and I sell or I rent my stock to them. I don't mind it, surely," he said, and he jerked his straw purple hat in the direction behind us, where the campus of Amazon State College might perhaps be located. Then he slapped his knee again.

I automatically looked over at my friend Doctor Henry Shine at that time. His eyes were wide, and his eye brows were jumping up and down. They will do it now and then. His head was down under his shoulders, so Mister Billy Hepplesworth could not see how we were looking back and forth at one another, even though he had his mirror and so on. My other friend Assistant Professor Louis Morse was between our row of seats and the front row of seats, in a row that he had all to himself. He was looking straight ahead. His features were blank. Now and then he will force them that way. You know it by these signs. His goatee goes straight out on such an occasion. His shoulders go square, and his spine goes in to a superb posture. His chin tilts up a bit, which is the reason that his goatee will go straight out at such a time, of course. His various parts were doing those matters. In the shot gun seat, Doctor Joel Mercy was holding his head in his hands and rolling it. Of course, he was not doing it in so many words. His neck and his shoulders were doing their usual job of holding up his head. He did not require his hands for it, but they were cupped on his ears, and it looked like rolling. It is how that saying came about, I imagine. On the other side of Miss Lula, between her and Doctor Henry Shine, was Doctor Sarah Ohm, shaking her own head. You can tell it was a unanimous and universal reaction we were having to Mister Billy Hepplesworth's words at the time. Most of us in that van were in the Hebrew line, if you like to put it that way. Most of us in the van did not happen to like to put it that way, but, if you are in the land of Amazon, you will hear it put that way at times. I was used to it. The rest of them were not used to it.

"Is that Crow Hollow there?" my best friend Doctor Henry Shine said. He was looking down the hill side to a town or a village coming by. It was in a hollow, after all. You could see two or three colored people in it, even from high up on the road.

"Yes sir," Mister Billy Hepplesworth said. "They got their own highway exit and everything," he said. He said that semantically. This is what he said phonetically. Evvy Thang.

Doctor Sarah Ohm said, "Do my ears deceive me?"

Miss Lula laughed her complicated laugh. "You ain't heard a thing," she said.

"What about the law?" Doctor Sarah Ohm said.

"Law's law, people is people," Mister Billy Hepplesworth said. "The animals went into the ark two by two," he said. "Like with like, word of the Lord," he said.

"Oh man," Doctor Joel Mercy said.

I said "Let us go in there."

"Why ever do you want to do that?" Mister Billy Hepplesworth said.

"I am fairly broke," I said.

"Any of you folks second that emotion?" Mister Billy Hepplesworth said, but no one seconded my emotion at that time. "You have work. I heared it," Mister Billy Hepplesworth said.

Assistant Professor Louis Morse turned in his seat and bulged his eyes out at me. They bulge some what all the time, but he gave them some extra. "This fine young man is an employed, tax paying, responsible citizen," he said to Mister Billy Hepplesworth, but he never took his bulging eyes from me at the time.

"I am broke any way," I said. "You have some listings in there?" I said.

Doctor Henry Shine pulled his own hair and coughed several times.

The exit was coming up. "Why, let me think," Mister Billy Hepplesworth said. He stroked his chin. Then he tugged on the brim of his straw purple hat. Then the exit went by. We were past it. Then he said, "Why, no. No, I don't. I'm sorry for it."

The rest of the after noon, whiles Mister Billy Hepplesworth squired us around Gum, Assistant Professor Louis Morse would look at me now and then and curl his lip and tap on his coin dispensing device. I asked him about it one time. "Louis, why were you tapping on your coin dispensing device that time?" I said. "I did not utter a contradiction," I said.

"True," he said. "That is why I didn't charge you," he said. "But you were in babble mode. I really should impose a levy on your babble," he said.

It is how I got my first look at Crow Hollow. Miss Isabel and her daughter Miss Dee Light Brown lived in Crow Hollow at that time, for this reason. Miss Dee Light Brown has light brown skin. Her mother's skin is not or was not brown, but her father's skin is, or, was. His skin was not light brown. It was some other, darker, brown. I do not know where Miss Isabel or Miss Dee Light live at this particular time. I do not know if they live any where at all. I have not kept up with them.

Chapter 6

How Crow Hollow got its name.

We picked a rental house. Then we went over to Assistant Professor Louis Morse's own rental house, where we ate a meal. First, we waited to eat it. Then we ate it. We had to wait. It was going to be a master piece. A master piece meal is the only kind of meal that Doctor Henry Shine and Assistant Professor Louis Morse will cook for you, with out you are in an awe full hurry for some reason, or for some other reason. Then, they might feed you some left overs in stead of it. They will be left over master pieces. So you will have a master piece, like it or not. How you know it is a master piece is this. They will push back their chairs after they have eaten it up. They will look around at us assembled other persons with their eye brows raised. Some times, one of them or the other one of them will ask, "How was it?" or a similar question. Some times, they will not ask that question, for the answer to it will all ready be given. Some one will have said, "A masterpiece," or made a similar remark. I am not the one who ever says it. I do not know a master piece from an ass's elbow.

How I know this is, that one time I tried it. We all ate up one of those fellows' meals back there in Perry Street on the island of Manhattan. It happened that I liked that meal. It had an orange sauce on the chicken that delighted me all through whiles I was throwing it down. So, I thought I would try my piece, whence, I said it. I pushed my plate off, and I pushed my chair back in the other direction, and I said, "A master piece." At that time, Mister Henry Shine said, "Willy, you're an excellent dishwasher, when

you're not breaking them. But face it. You wouldn't know a masterpiece from an ass's elbow."

It cast me down to hear him say it, but it was the truth. I knew it. I look on the good side, how ever. I am an excellent dish washer. It is handy if you do not want to look at crusts and crumbs ironed to dishes you eating off. A cook is both a big picture sort of fellow and a detail sort of fellow, as I have heard. I am just a fine tuned small picture sort of fellow, in my own opinion. I tune in on the small crumbs and so on. I scrape them, and scrub them, and wash them off, be they ever so stubborn. Those other fellows will go in to the parlor and smoke their cigars and discuss their philosophies, for they are philosophy professors, of course. I will remain in the kitchen, scraping and scrubbing and washing the various dishes and platters and pans and pots, until every one shines dry. Now and then, I drop one. Those other fellows calculated that one or two broken dishes did not out weigh the convenience, I trow. It was the only way I knew to make the labor come out even, so, every one was happy, perhaps. Before the dinner, I and a variety of other persons wait around in the parlor, or where ever. We are discussing all sorts of matters whiles the aromas of the master pieces waft around to make our spit run. We go on talking in a civilized fashion. It may be we are licking our lips now and then, but we do not let on. We are being civilized, of course. Then, we eat up the master piece. Then, I wash up the pots and pans that the master piece was cooked in. Then, I wash the dishes off which the master piece was eaten. Then, it is even. Some times, the money end was not even, how ever. Some times, I did not have my share of the money to put in, so I put in some more labor. I was not all ways employed in some school as the rest of those fellows were, so I might put my own studies and so on to a side

to take up the balance. They did not mind it. They were busy fellows. They could use the extra time I provided in that manner. So, they used it. Some of the time, if I could not put in my money share, then they were irritated, how ever. I admit it.

It is the way it went in our other house back there, in Perry Street, on the island of Manhattan. Once we were in Gum, I had paying positions of some kinds. We continued our Perry Street arrangements none the less, how ever. It was our custom by then. I did not mind it. So there we were, the night of the day we spent with Mister Billy Hepplesworth. The time was seven eighteen post meridiem or so, but the dusk light remained. It was out side the picture window. We were in the parlor, discussing a variety of matters, while the master piece aromas circulated through the air near by, and various persons' spit was running, and such persons pretended other wise, and so on. The cooks' voices were booming around in the back ground. They were invisible, for they were in the kitchen. The cooks were invisible. Every one knows their voice is invisible, so, I do not mean that their voices were invisible. To tell you it would be to waste your valuable time. Those cooks' voices were not confined to the kitchen any way, so you can tell my meaning that way, or the other way. The cooks were disputing some matters of technique. Assistant Professor Louis Morse's voice was deep and assured, for that of such a short statured person. Doctor Henry Shine's voice is fairly deep as well, but it has a some what nasal Bronx quality in it. It was just as usual, except it was in the land of Amazon this time. It was not on the island of Manhattan, this particular time. Monsieur Jean-Marie l'Acombe was not present, this time. He was in Paris, or some other land, this time. Miss Lula and her son, Master Joshua Oleander, were present this time, how ever.

Master Joshua Oleander was crawling between the legs of various persons. They were under the dinner table, of course. The legs were under it. The persons were not under it. Master Joshua Oleander would tug at your shoe strings, if you had shoe strings, which I had. They were on my shoes. They were not red white and blue shoe strings. They were just white shoe strings that I wear on my running shoes. Master Joshua Oleander was emitting various sounds at the time, such as, that of a steam engine on a rail road train of freight cars. Those rail road trains cross the trestle over Highway Seven, nine or ten times a day. That trestle is near by. No doubt he has heard that sound often.

Doctor Joel Mercy was leaning his head on his hands and he was looking at a doily. He looked some what glum, I should say. He, too, was glum in Gum. Was it a glumly doily, or was it a glumly thought preoccupying his mind. I do not know.

Doctor Sarah Ohm was looking at Doctor Joel Mercy thinking his glumly thoughts, it seemed to me. Her face is a blank, as a rule. You can not tell what she is up to. If I might ask, this is what I might ask. Is the rule that she is hiding some thoughts, or is the rule that she is not having thoughts. Is she entranced at that time, perhaps. Doctor Sarah Ohm has lovely, dark eyes. Her eye lids make intersecting curves. Two of them are concave up, of course. The other two are concave down, of course. The eye lashes on them are long and dark and delicate. Never the less I found it difficult to like her, once I had acted the fool in front of her. I have explained it.

Miss Lula was talking about Mister Billy Hepplesworth. That fellow had made some impressions on her, apparently. "That man's a horror, but he's all so a stitch," she said. "I wonder", she said to Doctor Sarah Ohm, "did you admire the floral pattern on his

hatband? Were those particularly delphinium sepals dancing all around that cream colored ribbon?"

Doctor Sarah Ohm's eyes focused on Miss Lula. "I didn't notice," she said.

"All that tickee tackee of his ensemble," Miss Lula said. "It fairly blazed in that sunlight," she said. "It almost made me squint," she said. "The cap of his gold fountain pen, you know, it was in his breast pocket, and how white that white shirt was too. That beautiful Cartier watch? That expandable wrist band? Was it platinum, I wonder? I think it was. Then those thin tin frames on his wraparound sunglasses? I think they were incongruous. More fitting to an easy rider sort of fellow than a pillar of our local commerce here, such as he is. He is my daddy's second best friend." She turned to me. "You didn't know that, did you, Willy? Well, I am going to tell on him. He is getting awfully showy. It makes me wonder about his misspent youth. Or it may be that school he has now. It is so difficult to live wickedly in this town, it may be he is getting his self a late start," she said. Then she laughed.

"Have you tried it?" Doctor Sarah Ohm said.

"To live wickedly? Oh my, yes," Miss Lula said. "It is even more difficult with a three-year-old," she said. "Leave the man alone," she said. Master Joshua Oleander had my left shoe untied, and he was working on the other one. "He likes you," she said.

At that particular time, some corbies were pecking the ground among squirrels by a tall bird feeder in Assistant Professor Louis Morse's front yard. They could be seen through the plate glass window and they caught Miss Lula Smith's eye. I was looking at them as well, watching how one of them would stretch his wing to show its pinion feathers to keep the squirrels from the loose seeds, perhaps, or to some other purpose,

perhaps. May be that he was sleepy, and so, he was making ready to gap, so he was stretching for that reason. I will often make a stretch and a gap, my self, at sun down.

" 'Beware a crow that spreads a wing'," Miss Lula said. " 'It means disaster'," she said.

Doctor Joel Mercy looked up from his doily at that time. He stroked his crow black silky moustaches, and he said "No kidding."

" 'Look away from one that looks at your door'," Miss Lula said. " 'It means danger'," she said.

"It's not looking at the door," Doctor Joel Mercy said. "It's looking at the window," he said.

Miss Lula said, "Billy didn't tell you about Crow Hollow."

"He didn't seem to," I said.

" 'Flee a crow that bears red thread'," Miss Lula said. " 'It means fire'," she said.

"They had a fire there," Doctor Joel Mercy said.

Miss Lula said, "Oh yes, that's right."

"Well then," Doctor Joel Mercy said.

Miss Lula leaned over to Doctor Joel Mercy and she shoved him on his shoulder. "You a rationalist," she said.

"I'm a biologist," he said.

Miss Lula said, "I like biology."

"Do you," he said.

"Oh yes," Miss Lula said. "Your birds, your bees, and evvy thang," she said.

Doctor Sarah Ohm, she put in at this time. This is what she put in. "You're keeping us in suspense."

"Are you a rationalist too?" Miss Lula said.

"Most of the time," Doctor Sarah Ohm said.

"You won't like it much then," Miss Lula said.

"Louis is the ultra rationalist," Doctor Sarah Ohm said.

"Don't you think it," Miss Lula said. "He loves my tales," she said.

Assistant Professor Louis Morse careened his voice around the corner. First, it was in the kitchen. Then, it was in the passage. Then, it came in to the dining room. That voice said, "I love your tail, my dear."

Doctor Joel Mercy put on a sound of a sneer, I should say. I do not know the sound of a sneer, how ever. May be that he put on a sound of a snort. Or, he just coughed.

Miss Lula shafted Doctor Joel Mercy a sharp look. "Don't you tease him," she said.

"Never," Doctor Joel Mercy said. He coughed again, or he sneered again.

"He has his appearances to keep," Miss Lula said.

"That's a nice word for it," Doctor Joel Mercy said.

"Use your own, if you have to," Miss Lula said. "Don't hurt him with mine," she said.

Doctor Joel Mercy said, "You have nothing to fear."

I was wondering about some matters, so I said, "I am wondering about some matters."

Miss Lula cast me a questioning look. Doctor Joel Mercy sent me a look, the kind of which I could not tell, for this reason. His eyes appeared pasted on the surface of the lenses of his eye glasses. They are that thick. His eye glass lenses are thick. His eyes are not thick, particularly.

"How does that corbie know a fire is on its way?" I said.

"He only the messenger," Miss Lula said. "I lay it down he don't know a thing," she said.

Doctor Joel Mercy said, "Corvus corax sinuatus. It knows a thing or two."

"Where does it bring the message from?" I said.

"Nobody know," Miss Lula said.

"What was this fire, then?" I said.

"Will I tell you?" Miss Lula said.

I said, "I want to know it."

"All right," Miss Lula said. "This was a while ago. I make it eighteen seventy or so. I had the entire tale from my daddy's grandma on his own daddy's side. The colored people were called darkies then, of course, and where they live, Crow Hollow, it was called Darkie's Hollow at the time. Well, Gum was getting big, and the capitol building was going up, and so on. The compartment of roads and bridges was setting to print maps of the commonwealth at that time. The main drag between the government buildings at 't other end of the town and the campus here'n, Thomas Jefferson Boulevard, it was nothing but a dirt road its self, that's how primitive things were yet. Well, no

matter how primitive their city yet was, those town fathers, they didn't want to ship off maps to the Yankees and the French, and so on, that they said Darkie's Hollow on them and all like that. It would not do for commerce and polite society. So it was a debate. What were they going to call that place?"

"Commerce," Doctor Joel Mercy said.

"Oh yes," Miss Lula said. "It was civilizing us," she said.

"Slavery's commerce," Doctor Sarah Ohm said.

"Whut side do you think I'm on, exactly?" Miss Lula said. May be that it would have been an other one of her fights, but with her words at that time, Miss Lula quashed that fight. Later on, matters between the two of them ripened, and she did not quash it. I will tell you about it. I will not tell you now. I will tell you later. "You don't know Grand Kleagle Parkway on the west side," Miss Lula said. "Well 'course you don't, you just came here," she said. "That Grand Kleagle was Joe Mills. He got his self in a murther down by the hollow. Joe Mills was nothing but a low down layabout with a mellifluous tongue. Lay about all week long on a bench out by Holy Angels Church, talking against President Johnson or President Grant, swearing and spitting and whaling down on the occasional carpet bagger who might come by and put up an argument. Young Mister Mills is said to have laid out fifteen men. It is all he was good for. You can still find that bench with his initials J. M. carved in them, along with the horn head of a devil. Holy Angels is still there too. Joe Mills was a rabble rouser. His friends and his following was all rabble. He was the Grand Kleagle of the Commonwealth of Amazon, and he done some murthers his self I trow. He was said to ride through the hollow with his horse men on Saturday nights. At least, some sons of bitches was coming through on

horseback in their pointy head pajama sheets on Saturday nights, back then. Then they'd rear those mares up and kick in the windows and take away again. All good fun, ruckety ruck. Some time it gets out of hand, you see, and they are liquored up, or otherwise engaged in a delirium of some sort. They was liquored up most of the times they came that way. Then they might drag some poor woman out her house, whiles her little children scream and beg for mercy, and take her to the woods by Dammed Lake, and do God knows what to her. Those boys had a bad name. Everybody knew it was young Mister Mills running the thing, but no one dast do a thing about it. Not the sheriff, nor the marshal, nor the pastor of Holy Angels. He was only a Catholic pastor, so he had no pull anyway. But they was a healer, a seer, in Darkie Hollow. What have you, a magician. Walter Three Eyes was his name. His daddy was a sachem of the Misery tribe. Iroquois. They had camps around Misery Swamp. It is a common name, here, for the French name Misere, and those people fought French settlers by the Misery Swamp, and 't other swamps west of here, to a standstill. They gave those French settlers a good deal of misery too. So the appellation. I don't know how to say they real name, which it sounds like Ack Chooey, or Ach Gooey, or some other, like sound. Unmusical, to say the very least. That language is fair to extinct. The children of that tribe were penned up in the fort on Boney Banks when the English took it over and disallowed from speaking it until they forgot it. Don't ask me what happened to they parents. I won't tell you. It was not a small tribe, but it's gone as a practical matter. But here is what Ach Gooey means, as I've heard. It means, We Are Coming. They were a fierce people. Walter Three Eyes, he came by his own particular name this way. He cast spells. He had a room in his cabin for magic. You had a sick child, or you were lovelorn, or you were seeking to revenge

your self on someone, you took over to Darkie Hollow and ast him for his aid and comfort. He would not take money from you, as the story goes. But he would want something. It might be a trinket from around your neck. It might be a hair from your head if he liked the look of that hair. Sometimes, he just wanted you tell him something. He might ask you, what day of the week you was born on. If you did not know, then tough titties. You was out of there. Or he might ask you your daddy's momma's maiden name, for an example. You tell him what he wants to know, then he'd go to whispering to himself a while. He'd get in to that back room. You couldn't go after him. He wouldn't let you in there. He'd pile some dirt on the puncheon floor boards, and build him a fire on the pile, and sit there awhispering and amuttering, and now and then toss something into it. He had passels of items for those doings, such as, dried up mouse's hearts and snake's eyes and dog's livers and so on. Here's the issue of the matter. On occasion the client, or what have you, would sneak a peek in the doorway, and there would be Walter, sitting, looking into the fire with his third eye open. It was green. And it glowed."

"I'll be," Doctor Joel Mercy said.

Miss Lula made a blank look at him. Then she made a pout at him. Then she made a wide grinning manner of smile at him. "Professor Joel, why don't you relax and enjoy it? I be good to you," she said.

Doctor Joel Mercy looked her way a time or two with his wide eyes that were pasted on his glasses. Then he made as if to bow. He put one hand by his belly. It was a small, round belly. He leaned over that belly. It was a graceful gesture, but I look some

thing askance at a man bowing in a T-shirt which, it says "Fuck the Red Sox" on it. It is askew, so I am askance. "Sorry," Doctor Joel Mercy said.

"It's all right," Miss Lula said, but she just smiled some more, and she was not going to talk again with out some one asks her, apparently.

So I asked her. "Go on now," I said. "Why don't you?" I said. "Please," I said.

Miss Lula, she looked at me with out changing that smile, then she said, "Joe Mills was one old devil's son. The story says he had nine children in the hollow, all of them got on women that he had raped. One of them women was Walter Three Eyes own grand daughter. Her name was Issie. Issie's child by Joe Mills was a six year old girl called Goodie. This is in eighteen eighty or so. One Saturday night, Joe Mills comes Kleagling in to the hollow with four five of his trash, all of them on they mares, kicking in the windows and so on. Joe Mills' mare, her name was Fuck. That's what he called her when he warn't near by his mother. When he were near by his mother, he called that mare Fire, which is ironic. This Saturday night, Fuck or Fire or what have you kicked in the window on Issie's shack and knocked over a lantern in there. Shack burned, Issie and Goodie died. Joe Mills got off his mare to drag them out, but Goodie had already departed. Old Joe burned his arms and his legs. I don't know if he was brave, or if he was just too drunk to care. I don't know if he loved them, or if he didn't. Issie was still awake when he got her on to the dirt out side. She whispered something in his ear. Then she died too. Everybody says Joe Mills was horripilated so that he got on the ground, and he wept, and he begged Issie's forgiveness. Nobody knows what she whispered to him that night, but Joe Mills was a changed man after. I won't say he reformed, but he quietened. It's the legend, anyway. But that's not the end of it." Miss Lula looked

around the dinner table. We all were interested. Doctor Joel Mercy was even interested, apparently. No one said any thing. You could hear Assistant Professor Louis Morse and Doctor Henry Shine disputing some thing about spice cumin and spice cayenne in the kitchen, but you could not make it out, precisely. I was like to drool, the smells were coming so good from there, but I wished to hear the end of that story before I eat. It reminds me of when I was seven years old in Culptown. We were all sitting on the floor around the teacher and she was on a stool, reading us a story. I had to pee bad. I do not recall the story, but I wished to hear the end of it before I pee, so I did not raise my hand. I did pee, how ever. I peed my pants. It was like that. Miss Lula, she gave Doctor Joel Mercy a wicked grin, or a mocking grin, perhaps. "Is Joe Mills boring you, professor?" she said.

"You can call me that tomorrow," he said. "Maybe," he said. "After my interview," he said.

"Oh, well then," she said. "You won't want to hear the rest of it," she said. "You want to go rest up before your interview," she said. "I'm sure you'll be fine. Only, you ought eat what Louis is making for you first. Then you'll have you a sockdolager interview," she said.

"My appetite has gone away somewhere," said Doctor Joel Mercy.

Miss Lula said, "You po' thang. You fretting?"

From the kitchen came Assistant Professor Louis Morse rumbling his voice. "I heard that," he said. "He isn't worried about a thing," he said. He appeared in the doorway. His fore head was shining in sweat drops, and he had on his white apron, and he was bearing a spatula in one of his hands. It was his left hand. "The fix is in," he said.

"All right then," Miss Lula said.

"I fixed it," said Assistant Professor Louis Morse.

Miss Lula said, "Who else? Louis gave me a B minus in Ethics 100. He said it won't be ethical to give me any more than that just because he loves me."

"It would have been a C if I didn't love, you dear," Assistant Professor Louis Morse said.

"You sound proud of it," said Doctor Sarah Ohm.

Assistant Professor Louis Morse said, "I am proud of it. But don't tell anyone."

Miss Lula said, "He's lying. 't ain't ethical."

"I am the most ethical fixer in Gum," Assistant Professor Louis Morse said.

"That was my own B minus," said Miss Lula.

Assistant Professor Louis Morse said, "Jobs are different. All's fair in office politics."

"If you say so, honey," Miss Lula said.

"If it will get me the job," Doctor Joel Mercy said.

"You better practice sharp. He ain't fixed a thing." Miss Lula said.

Assistant Professor Louis Morse said, "How little you understand, Miss Smith. How do you suppose the varlet snared his precious interview?"

"How?" said I, for I was curious.

"The bio chair and I are very good friends," Assistant Professor Louis Morse said.

"You? And a full professor?" I said.

"Oh yes," Assistant Professor Louis Morse said. "Yes, indeedy," he said. He raised himself up by his heels and back down again.

"How comes it?" I said.

"Willy, you've seen him," Assistant Professor Louis Morse said. "The fat fuck with the checkered vest."

"The fellow from the poker game?" I said. Assistant Professor Louis Morse had that poker game Sunday afternoons. He put on his eye shade. It was green. He smoked his cigar. It was black. Those poker fellows all smoked their cigars as well. Their cigars were all black. I did not smoke a black cigar. I did not smoke a cigar. I did not smoke any thing. I did not play poker, either.

"Yes, the fat fuck from the poker game," Assistant Professor Louis Morse said.

"Why you talk that way?" Miss Lula said.

"I owe the villain six hundred forty seven dollars and ninety five cents," Assistant Professor Louis Morse said. "And I am inebriated," he said.

"Well it isn't nice," Miss Lula said. "Anyway," she said. "You had not ought to play with fire whiles you guzzling that Beefeater's," she said. "You're like to run out here with your hair burning," she said. "Then I'll have to put you out," she said.

"I like it when you put me out, dear," Assistant Professor Louis Morse said.

"I know you do," she said.

Doctor Sarah Ohm said, "This is perverse."

Miss Lula said, "Don't we know it. That's why we like it. I am the wust fag hag in Gum."

"You look like no hag to me," I said.

Miss Lula looked flattered and said, "You h'ain't seen me 'neath the full moon stir my cauldron. "

Assistant Professor Louis Morse said, "Lula's the most fabulous fag hag in this whole hick burg. And the other sissies can't stand that she's mine all mine."

"It's true love, then," Doctor Joel Mercy said.

Miss Lula said, "That's right. That's egg zactly what it is."

"Louis, I need you," said Doctor Henry Shine. He was in the kitchen, of course. We could not see him, but we could hear him any way.

"Coming, dear," Assistant Professor Louis Morse said. Then he came there, so we could not see him any longer, but he said, "Put your bibs on," and we heard it, but we had no bibs, so we did not put them on at that time.

Doctor Sarah Ohm said, "You'd better tell us the rest. The food's coming."

"Is it all right with you, professor?" Miss Lula said.

"By all means," Doctor Joel Mercy said. "Joe Mills is on the ground," he said.

"Ain't he the politest soul?" Miss Lula said. "I might like him," she said.

"Hurry on up," I said.

"You, you ain't polite," Miss Lula said. "He is, usually," she said to the new people. "I think he's excited," she said.

"Food's coming," I said.

"All right then," Miss Lula Smith said. "Joe Mills is on the ground. His arms is bleeding. Issie and Goodie are dead on the ground with him. Joe Mills is begging Issie to forgive him, but she can't hear him, of course. Or maybe she can. Maybe she hears his prayer, but she won't forgive him a thing. Joe Mills got off of the ground and went on home and healed up. Then he shot Fuck and burnt her on a pyre where the road forks east of the hollow. There's a red boulder where he buried her bones. You can still see it.

It has all kinds of magic written on it. They say that mare walks the road when you have a fire anywhere in Crow Hollow to this day. Well, it didn't do him much good. Rumor was, Walter Three Eyes was casting spells against him. Joe Mills went down to Walter's cabin a year later, on the anniversary. They argued and whiles they were getting into it a murther of crows began to gather. They lit on the road. They lit on the roof tops all around there. They came walking in to Walter Three Eyes' cabin. And whiles Joe Mills was abegging for his mercy and forgiveness, Walter's third eye opened up. Joe Mills was terrified. We know it by his terrible screams that the witnesses all heard. By the green glow of that witch eye, Joe Mills saw that those corbies were bearing red thread in their beaks. Every blame one, red threads." Miss Lula looked at me. "Guess what next," she said.

"Well, fire," I said.

"Well of course," she said. "Egg zactly right," she said. She said, "Nobody know how it started. The witnesses saw the glow in that shack's window go from green to orange. Then the flames were licking the window and the doorway. Joe Mills screamed some more, but nobody heard a sound from Walter Three Eyes, and nobody made a move to save either one of them. Screaming stopped eventually, and the shack went down to timber and ashes. Next day they found Joe Mills's bones in the mess. But nobody ever saw a trace of Walter Three Eyes. That's it." Miss Lula looked around at us and her own eyes were wide and wide.

From the kitchen boomed the voice of Assistant Professor Louis Morse. It said, "They named a road after that fuck."

Miss Lula said, "And they named the hollow for the crows."

Chapter 7

The madness of love.

I did not know that Miss Lula was good at stories before she told us that one, but she has a bent for it. She was bent that way. Here is an other story Miss Lula told to us a week or so later. It is about the show business. When she was a child, Miss Lula was in that business. It was that business that bent her, perhaps. So I imagine.

We were eating up an other master piece at our new house we had just moved in to, which, it had the location 17 Samuel Mudd M.D. Avenue in that city of Gum. That house was not new. We were new to that house. That house was about one hundred and thirteen years old. It was 17 New Street at that time, for this reason. It was a new street. Then, Doctor Samuel Mudd set the leg bone of the well known thespian Mister John Wilkes Booth. Then it was 17 Samuel Mudd M.D. Avenue, of course.

Doctor Sarah Ohm was not eating, but the rest of us were eating. Doctor Sarah Ohm was shopping. Our new house lacked some items. The rooms were still empty. There were no curtains on the windows. A lot of furniture was there, but most of it was stacked in the parlor with some sheets on it. The sound of our voices echoed from the walls. The only matters unpacked at that time were the kitchen utensils. Assistant Professor Henry Shine and Assistant Professor Louis Morse did a lot of banging around with those utensils in the kitchen behind the dining room. First banging and murmuring and muttering issuing forth from there. Then the aromas issued. After an awe fully long time, as it usually seemed, the food issued. We talked about this and that whiles the

banging and the aromas were issuing. Miss Lula did not get on to her story, this time, until we were all properly seated to eat up the master piece.

There was no wall between the parlor and the dining room, but they were different rooms; you could tell it. So whiles we were eating, you could see these mounds of furniture under the sheets in there, looking some what like spooks, if you were disposed that way. I was so disposed.

Miss Lula told us this. "My daddy took Mama and me and my brother Roland onto the variety circuit in Amazon, South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida. It was strictly small time. Sam ampersand Calafia was the billing. They didn't mention me on the card, I was the surprise. Cardboard bills they had printed up themselves and propped on this old easel they carried around and put up next to the ticket booth. 'Maestros of Presto Digitation,' is what it said on the bills. A little magic, a deal of tap, and a lot of patter. The gazettes down there used to write some harsh things about our performing skills, which I suppose were never so remarkable, really. My mama used to go in the lady's room to weep over the pans – she didn't want Sam to see. Never such a thing as a decent place to dress, just a shower-curtain sort of a thing backstage to change behind. The rubes liked the patter, and it got to be a bigger and bigger part of the act. They turned me out in bows, and rouge, and a glittery leotard. Roland and me sang songs and made jests on Sam. We would get a good one over and leave him sputtering. Then we'd exit ever so scornfully, stage right. Sam, he'd stand there, appealing for sympathy from those fat bellies in the folding chairs, his palms out like this." Miss Lula, right here, she pushed out her lip, then she made her self look sad. Then she said, "But he never got any mercy, because we would have a man in the crowd, and he would start throwing things. Which

set them going, you know. Soon everybody'd be throwing things. It was the beer. We would all run off stage left, dodging the popcorn and the corndogs and the soda – then Roland and me, we'd re-enter to applause. We'd sing some duet, tap-dance playing banjos the whole time, and follow that up with some jests. After we won over the customers, why, even Sam would be welcomed back to the stage. All four of us would juggle bowling pins and other suitable implements and finish things up in a, you know, a glow of family fun and all like that." Miss Lula sipped from her wine goblet then. "I like this," she said.

Assistant Professor Joel Mercy said, "Well I can get you some." He was an assistant professor at this time, for he had passed his audition.

Miss Lula said, "Why thanks, professor. I hope it's cheap."

Assistant Professor Joel Mercy said, "Perhaps a gift."

Miss Lula laughed right at him then. She made a bray like a donkey like this: "Haw. Haw. Haw." I do not believe Assistant Professor Joel Mercy said any thing else all night. He looked at his fingers all night. His day of triumph was sullied, I imagine.

My friend Assistant Professor Louis Morse said, "One pays for the risks involved."

Miss Lula said "Tell me about it."

Assistant Professor Louis Morse said, "Well I'm not conversant with all of the market forces –"

Miss Lula said, "I know about your forces. They come with saps and badges. It's the same with what I do, you know." She lowered her voice a little. "I mean, you know what I do. I only meant, you know. Like, wow. Tell me about it."

I did not know at that time what it was that Miss Lula was referring to. My friend Assistant Professor Louis Morse knew what, how ever. My other friend, Assistant Professor Henry Shine, he did not know it at that time. He did know it at some later time, how ever. Our other housemate, Assistant Professor Joel Mercy, did not know what it was that she was referring to either at that time, I believe. He found out about it some other time, I believe.

I found out my self what it was all about just after the dinner. That was when I was talking to Assistant Professor Louis Morse and the other people were gone. I asked him to what Miss Lula was referring when she said those words *Tell me about it* and so on. And that was when he said "Cocaine," and I said, "Whut?"

Then, my friend Assistant Professor Louis Morse, he said, "Lula purveys cocaine to the locals, dear."

I said, "Does she."

Assistant Professor Louis Morse said, "Indeed."

I said, "Wow, that's dangerous."

He said, "So is what I do with my sweet behind on Saturday night. So is transacting the purchase of this wine. We're in Amazon." Here was a juncture where at Assistant Professor Louis Morse got his sparkling eyes. He leaned over. Then he whispered, "Do you know Willy. Every once in a while I wake up in the middle of the night. I stare out the window in my bedroom at that big fat orange moon you people have down here. And then I sit up in my bed, I clap my hands to my ears, and I say, 'My God. Oh my God. I'm in Amazon.'"

I said, "Do you really do that?"

He said, "No."

That was some conversation I had with Assistant Professor Louis Morse after that dinner. It is a digression. But I am still telling you about some other conversation that we all had during that dinner. I am back on the track. It is right after Miss Lula said that "I know about your forces," and so on to Assistant Professor Louis Morse.

At that time, this is what Assistant Professor Louis Morse said: "Oh." Then, he frowned.

Then Miss Lula laughed again. She reached across and took up his hands in to her hands. She said, "I'm sorry."

My friend Assistant Professor Louis Morse, he blinked and raised his eyebrows as high as they would go, and took his hands back from her. Then she put on a smile. Then she shut it down, how ever. It might be, she did that because of the tobacco stains on her buck teeth, or because of her buck teeth simplicitaire. "Simplicitaire" is a philosopher's word. It is a word of which Assistant Professor Louis Morse was, or is, fond. Or, it might be that she shut down that smile for reasons and purposes that I do not know. She asked Assistant Professor Louis Morse at that time, "Did I hurt your feelings?"

Assistant Professor Louis Morse said, "Of course not."

Miss Lula said "Really, I'm sorry."

Assistant Professor Louis Morse said, "Not necessary to say so."

My best friend, Assistant Professor Henry Shine, said, "What was so hot about the patter?"

Miss Lula looked at Assistant Professor Henry Shine over the top of her wine glass with a different kind of smile going on her lips. It looked like a child, she opens a box

that is wrapped in tansy paper, and it is tied up with a ribbon and a bow, and there is a pretty little doll in it. I like to think about Miss Lula when she was little at one time. I do not like to think how she trod the boards and so on at that time. I do not like to think how she had on the red glitter, and the silver glitter, and the chartreuse face powder, and the blue eye lid shadow, and the kohl eye liner, and gaudy ornamentation of various other kinds that she may have had on, and so on. It is an unhappy thought.

Miss Lula said at that time, "I like the way you fellas do a steak. Who prepared this wonderful piece of meat?"

Assistant Professor Louis Morse sat up straight and said, "Henry and I planned everything together."

Assistant Professor Henry Shine said, "Lou did the tenderizing," and he made a chopping motion with his left hand, for he is a left-handed fellow.

Assistant Professor Louis Morse said, "Henry seasoned, and I ran the stove."

Assistant Professor Henry Shine said, "He's the stove man."

Miss Lula looked at Assistant Professor Louis Morse in a manner that was supposed to let a person know that she respects that person. It is a matter of raising your eyebrows and puckering your lips a certain way.

Miss Lula said, "Friday nights, I know about it. First time we talked was when I went down to Beau's Beef House to flirt with him."

"I thought it was merely a wonderful accident," Assistant Professor Louis Morse said. "But she disabused me of that notion immediately," he said.

Miss Lula said "They ain't no secrets in this town. The whole class knew your hobby. We were intrigued by the red-eyed cooking philosopher. I was chasing you."

"I was flattered," Assistant Professor Louis Morse said.

"I didn't think he was going to give me the time of day," Miss Lula said.

"I played hard to get," Assistant Professor Louis Morse said.

Miss Lula addressed Assistant Professor Henry Shine. She said "Do you season everything around here?"

Assistant Professor Henry Shine said, "I'm the spiciest guy in the room."

Miss Lula laughed. It was not the way she laughed at Assistant Professor Louis Morse. It was more the way you laugh when you have set your cap for a person. It is the way you laugh when you want that person to realize it.

Then she was looking at me. She asked me this. "What did you do?"

"I ain't done no thing," I protested.

"On this scrumptious meal," she said.

I said, "I do the dishes. I have not done them as yet."

Miss Lula made a face of some kind. It was supposed to be a kind face, I believe.

Assistant Professor Louis Morse said, " 'From each according to his abilities.' "

Miss Lula said, "I'm sure you got other things you do."

Of course I did. At that particular moment I could not think of any of them, however. Every one does all kinds of actions, of course. You can think about it. You take care of the kitchen in one way, or in some other way, whatever your chore is or chores are. You eat your food and you drink your fluids. You go out the house a while. When you are out there, why, you do all sorts of actions. They are too numerous to mention. Then you come back in, most of the time. Other wise, where do you sleep. Some of the time, you sleep at some other location, of course. Assistant Professor Louis Morse slept

at some other location rather often, for example, on Saturday nights, with out he was bringing some Georgette fellow or Thomasina fellow back over to our own particular location. In those situations, why, then this Georgette or Thomasina was the one who had gone out of his own house, and he was the one who slept at some other location.

Namely, our location. There were times down there in the city of Gum, and there were even some times up there in the city of New York in the prior times, when Misters Henry Shine and Louis Morse, or Assistant Professors Henry Shine and Louis Morse, depending upon the city, did not come back in, after they went out on some particular Saturday night. I my self came back in the house, if I happened ever to go out of the house. I was not much for staying out all night. I did not bring any persons back to where we were living. I did not have much to say along those lines. Mister Louis Morse had much to say about it. May be that Mister Henry Shine had some, but he did not say them. You had to pick up on what he was about by means of observation and ratiocination. Mister Louis Morse approached it in a different manner. It was all ways some Georgette or Thomasina he told us about. It was never some George or Thomas. He was all ways giving us the low down on his comical adventures. You have to acquire your material before you can deliver a rodomontade of Mister Louis Morse's kind, or Assistant Professor Louis Morse's kind, in my opinion. You can not invent all of it. I did not ever acquire material of that kind. So I did not deliver a rodomontade.

I did not answer when Miss Lula said that to me, which was, of course, "I'm sure you got other things you do," and so on. I believe I just stared in to her blue eyes a while. Why I believe it is this. They were blue. They were as blue as the sky in a sunrise.

She turned to Assistant Professor Henry Shine at that time. "It was for to balance the energies." This was her reply to his question. I told you what the question was. Here it is, in case you do not remember it. What Was So Hot About The Patter?

Now I am continuing with Miss Lula's reply to that question. She said, "We managed it more often than not. But when I got to be grown, peoples' attention shifted, and doing things the old way got to be a stretch. At first, all four of us did stretch. But the show was less entertaining in general, I think. I began to notice how strangely intriguing, as if to compensate, the patter was becoming. Other people noticed it too. At first it was only a shift of tone, an alteration of the rhythms. Something about the way we looked at each other. Then I got to feeling something different. It was in the air. Not the air, really. The air that was among us. It was like we were spinning a different kind of reality and all like that in the air among us as we whispered to each other. Because – and this is strange, I suppose – we were whispering at the end, only whispering, and yet, every word we said was audible. At least, it was to some people. Some people in the back rows could hear us as easily as the people in front. Some ticket-takers and candy vendors on the other side of the swinging doors and even some passers by on the sidewalk outside, could hear, not only our every word, but, so they claimed, every little click of our teeth, each and every slurp in our throats of water. They said they could hear our spit going down just as well as you hear your own when you swallow."

Assistant Professor Joel Mercy, he did say some thing after all. I have remembered. At that particular time, he said, "How about that."

Miss Lula just rolled right over Assistant Professor Joel Mercy at that time. She said, "People – newspaper writers, mostly – would come to the stage door after a show,

just to look at us as we ran to the car. Fellas with press passes stuck in the sweatbands of their fedoras pushed up on their foreheads. They didn't ask us questions, they just stared. And we never talked about it among ourselves. It was quicksilver. It didn't save the act, though. Most people didn't notice a thing out of the ordinary. And it was not the kind of thing that invited people, you know, even if they did detect the strange thing of it in the night air, to come back for any more."

I said, "Why not?"

Then Miss Lula said some thing I did not like to hear. It was not her words, so much. It was her tone of voice looking down at me. Her voice did not do it, of course. Miss Lula did it. She did not do it either, of course. It is a metaphor. It is two metaphors. They are damn confusing. "They are damn confusing, Willy." Mister Maxwell Mentiroso told me that. I am going to keep them, how ever.

Here is what Miss Lula said on that occasion. "Why whut, Willy?" She said it with a smile. It was looking down too.

"Why wouldn't they come back?" I said.

Miss Lula looked in to my eyes with her blue eyes. It went on a while. Then it went on a while more. Then, after a while of that, I found that I my self could not swallow for one reason, or for some other reason. I was looking at a pulse that was in the hollow between where Miss Lula's throat was, and where her clavicle bone was. The skin over that hollow was sallow, and it was pulsing.

Miss Lula said, "I don't know, Willy. I imagine they were nervous. But I'm sure I don't really know."

I have not mentioned to you that Master Joshua Oleander was not at the table. He was under the table. He was under there making the sound of steam, the way it gushes from the brakes of a steam engine. We all sat there listening to him gush the steam at that juncture.

Then Assistant Professor Joel Mercy said, "I don't follow."

Miss Lula chewed on her steak. Then she said, "Mmmmmm." Just like that. "Mmmmmm."

Then Assistant Professor Louis Morse said, "I'm quite the fan of Ludwig Wittgenstein."

I did not grasp the portent or the intent or the content in his remark. I did not ask about it. My mood was poor. No one else asked either. I do not know what was going on in all of those other people's particular moods. It was getting towards mid night. They all were tired, perhaps. I happen to know that I myself was tired. Then, they all talked about Amazon State basket ball a while, except myself, as it happens. It is what you talked about in Amazon, when you were done with the other matters you had on your mind. It was some thing every one in Gum except myself was all ways waiting to talk about. They usually go on with out me, on such an occasion. It is what they did on this occasion.

An eccentricity of my friend, Assistant Professor Louis Morse, comes on the line right here. Namely, he was the head cheer leader of the Amazon State College varsity basket ball team. Often and often of an evening, we sat down on the side lines in the gymnasium and watched Assistant Professor Louis Morse do the double flip whiles he blew on his silver whistle and waved his green pennant at the same time. I do not

mention his green beanie with a silver propellor on it. I do not mention his green shorts and the silver stripes that were on the side of them. I do not mention that he was a fairly short man, just as I am, of course, with a square Brillo™ style goatee and blue stubble that went all the way up his cheeks to the bottom of his eyes. It all adds up. This is the sum. Eccentricity.

No thing else remarkable happened that particular evening, until comes the end of it. Every one but Miss Sarah Ohm and my self talked about basket ball. Then Miss Lula tucked her child, Master Joshua Oleander, and his rag bear, in to a blanket on the parlor couch that was covered in the sheet, and went up stairs, holding hands with Assistant Professor Henry Shine. She did it as if it was the most natural deed in the world. My friend Assistant Professor Henry Shine, when he was walking up those steps, his eyes were starting right out of his head. He did not say what he was thinking. He all most never does say it. How ever, I could tell what it was any way, for he is my best friend. He was thinking this. She Has Got The Wrong Fellow By Some Sort Of Misapprehension That She Is Under, And Perhaps I Will Not Fill Her In For A While, So To Speak. It was a grand brown staircase that starts plank in the middle of the parlor. It goes up just like an escalator. Stair Way To Paradise, we used to say. It was a jest, of course. When we were in there house hunting the day before, Assistant Professor Louis Morse saw those steps from the portal of 17 Samuel Mudd M.D. Avenue and he said, "Henry, this is the place."

It was a selling point, all right. It is a figure of speech. We were renting. We were not buying. Now Assistant Professor Henry Shine is going up those stairs to paradise with Miss Lula, and Assistant Professor Louis Morse is looking me in the eye

with his two eyes. His eyes are as blood shot as they usually were. He says, "Can you imagine. Foregoing a brandy such as this." At that time, Assistant Professor Louis Morse closed his eyes and sniffed his brandy. Then he says, "You have been privy to a phenomenon of human nature. The madness of love confined, but not civilized, by the strictures of courtship. I shall reflect upon it. Did you notice? Entirely non-verbal. As the divine Ludwig (blessed be his name) tells us, Whereof One Cannot Speak, Thereof One Must Remain Silent." Then he leaned over, and wagged his finger in front of my eyes, and made his eyes look up the stair way to paradise. "Young man, you too will partake of those delights some day." He said Young Man though I am nine weeks older than he is. It is his custom. I remind him some times, but he does it any way.

Chapter 8

The circus boy and the dog-faced baboon.

Miss Lula was in the kitchen when I got down there the following morning, after I got up, after I woke up, after I had some dreams which I did not remember at that time, the which, I do not recall them at this time, either. She was brewing coffee. I do not quaff coffee. I quaff milk with Hershey's Chocolate Syrup in it. It comes in pleasing brown cans. When I was walking down the stairs from paradise, I was trying to remember my dreams. When you walked up those stairs, they were the stairs to paradise. When you walked down those stairs, they were the stairs from paradise. It is like the Evening Star. Assistant Professor Louis Morse told me it. He said, "It is like the Morning Star and the Evening Star. They are the same, but they are not the same." It is a matter of philosophy. It is all so like a rose.

Assistant Professor Henry Shine said, "It's like the rose in Romeo and Juliet." They were both talking to me at one time, at the time. "A rose by any other name, et cetera," is what Assistant Professor Henry Shine told me at that time.

But Assistant Professor Louis Morse did not like it when Assistant Professor Henry Shine told me it. "Perhaps so, Willy," he said to me. He used to dispute a matter in that manner at times. He would talk to me or an other person, instead of to the original other person. "...if a rose is a rise, Willy," he said to me at the time.

It was an obscure remark. "That is an obscure remark, Louis." It is what Assistant Professor Henry Shine said to Assistant Professor Louis Morse on that point at that time. I am telling you about an other time than that one, how ever. I am telling you

about the time after Miss Lula and Assistant Professor Henry Shine consummated that which is devoutly to be wished, and I came down the stairs from paradise, and I was calling to my dream. My dream did not answer. It scooted down the hall some where. In my particular mind, I have hall ways, down which dreams are scooting. They are all so lurking. Some dreams are skulking. They are all so skulking or lurking in some rooms which stand off the hallways. When a dream scoots around a corner or in to a door way in my particular mind, it is a cloud with whizz lines, and you can see the happenings of the dream, a tumbling and a whirling in that cloud. They are dim, for this reason. It is a dream. You can not focus your eyes when you are looking in there. In my particular mind, when you look in the middle of a cloud in a hall way or a room, your eyes get plumb out of focus. They do not get plum out of focus. They get plumb out of a focus. They are out of plumb, but a plum is a fruit.

I am going back to the kitchen now. Miss Lula was brewing her coffee. I have told you. She said, "You look sad, Willy. You frowning." "Frowning" is under lined like that. It is poor style.

"That's poor style, Willy." Mister Maxwell Mentiroso, my cell mate, said it. I am going to under line it any way.

"Why you so sad, Willy?" Miss Lula said. Miss Lula has a deep, low voice. She asked me it in that particular voice. It is the one she has for asking.

She was wearing her blouse and her blue-jeans from last night. She was chewing on a marmalade English muffin. She was smoking a cigarette. I do not smoke cigarettes. I do not smoke at all. The coffee that she was brewing was in a device of filters and so

on. My friends are, or were, gourmets, of course. Assistant Professor Joel Mercy was not, or is not, a gourmet. He went along with it, how ever. I did not go along with it.

I am going to explain some thing. Assistant Professor Joel Mercy was Miss Lula's new boss. She took care of his mice for him. She watered them, and fed them, and she changed the tick they had in their cages, which was hay tick, or excelsior tick, or some other tick. Assistant Professor Joel Mercy would get those mice to learn a trick or two. For example, he would teach them to stay away from the green food, say, which he made to taste bitter, and to eat the red food, say, which he made to taste sweet. Only, it was not green food and red food. A mouse can not tell one of those kinds from the other, I believe. It was some other sensory cue that has left my memory. It is a mere example that I am inventing as a token of the principle. After those mice learned some thing, why, then Assistant Professor Joel Mercy would dice their brains in order to do his experiments on them. I do not know why he did that way, but he did. The mice, they had those brains in their skulls, of course. Assistant Professor Joel Mercy had to get those brains out of there before he could dice them, of course. That is where Miss Lula comes in. She picked those mice from their cages, squirming and squiggling and wiggling. I watched her do it one time. She put them in a little box with a hole the size of your thumb in it for their heads. They stuck their heads through it every time, unfortunately. It never failed, on account of some cheese Miss Lula had on the other side of the hole. Those mice, their little whiskers went wild at the taint of it. Then there was this blade on a lever handle, like the paper-cutter in the back office of the department where I was a scholar of elliptic curves. This blade on a lever handle fitted between two layers of the box on the side with the hole in it. It was a mouse guillotine, of course. Those mice had

necks the size of your thumb, more or less. It was a thumb size guillotine. Miss Lula would push on that handle, and it would be over, just like that. It was not like Ronald Coleman in A Tale of Two Cities. It was not like Errol Flynn in Elizabeth the Queen. It was not like cutting your lawn. This is what it was like. A pen falls off your desk.

Miss Lula did not like it. "I don't like it," she said one time. I believe that the reason that she did not like it is this. You do not feed the pen or water the pen before it drops off the side of your desk. You do not talk to the pen, or name the pen, or pet the pen, before it drops off the side of your desk. You put the pen on to your desk again. You do not put the mouse back again. That is the reason.

Though she did not like it, Miss Lula kept on with feeding those mice, and watering those mice, and beheading those mice. The reason is, she had three mouths to feed. "I got two mouths to feed," she said one time. "If you count the cat, three mouths," she said. "And I do count the cat," she said. "You want to know why?" she said. "Because I count the money," she said, and she stuck her elbow in my ribs. It gave me a terrible thrill. Any time she touched me, I was thrilled like that, so I was thrilled that time. She had other lines of business as well. I have told you. She was a busy woman.

I am going back in the kitchen an other time.

Miss Lula asked why I was so sad, but I did not tell her. I gave her an answer. It was not all true, how ever. "I am not sad," I said. " I am calling to some dreams I just had," I said.

Miss Lula put her cigarette out in the dish under her cup of coffee. I all ready liked Miss Lula at that time, but I did not like her cigarettes at that time. I did not like those cigarettes at any time. "What were they?" Miss Lula said.

I said, "They have gone away. It is why I am calling them."

Miss Lula said, "Never mind them dreams. Let them go on."

"Ought I?" I said. I was in the door way. Miss Lula was sitting at a long counter. It was made from yellow wood. My friend Assistant Professor Henry Shine had built it from scratch. He has strong arms. They are long. All of him is long, of course. Other wise, he would resemble an ape. He does not do that. He is in proportion, except for this. Height to breadth ratio. Miss Lula leaned towards me and patted the stool next to her one. They were tall red-leatherette stools with shiny studs in the cushions. My friend Assistant Professor Louis Morse took them from the night club where he cooked on Friday nights. Restaurants were his family's business, so he liked to keep his hand in.

"I like to keep my hand in." It is what he said one time.

"Come over here and let's talk a while," Miss Lula said. "I'm going to chase away those dreams," she said.

I sat down on the stool next to her. Then I could look at her blue eyes, and her high cliff cheek bones, and her red lips, and the white tips of her two front teeth bucking out under neath her red lips. I could look at the pulse pulsing in her throat, and the hair that was on her arm pits. I could look at her thighs covered up in her tight blue denim jeans and curving in towards her female parts. I could smell the pepper shampoo that was in her long pale gold hair that smelled like clove cigarettes. I could smell the tobacco ash smell coming out of her lungs as well. That last item is unfortunate, but

mostly I could feel the item of warmness of her body, so I did not care much about the other one. Her warmness was toasting me and making my heart race. "How?" I asked her.

She said, "I'm going to tell you about the dog-faced baboon and the circus boy."

I said, "Go right ahead, please."

She said, "If you a enchantress, you make a spell of magic to bring a lover to you like I'm going to tell you. First you drown a field mouse in a spring. Then you drown some moon beetles in a river. You put them in a mortar with some other things. These are the things you put in there. A river crab. The fat of a maiden dappled goat. Which, it must be a maiden. A pair of ibis eggs. Myrrh, two drams of it. Two drams of crocus. Italian galingale, four drams. Four drams uncut frankincense, and an onion. Two drams of storax. And the dung of a dog-faced baboon. They do not say male or female. I all ways use a female's."

I said, "No."

She said, "Surely."

I said, "Are you one?"

"Am I a whut?" Miss Lula said.

"A enchantress, begging your pardon," I said.

Miss Lula, her eyebrows went up, and she made her buck tooth grin at me. I have never seen teeth, that were buck teeth, as pretty as the ones that she had. Only, they did have a brown spot here and there from her Camel™ Cigarettes. I did not mind those brown spots she had. I minded those Camels™, but I have heard my father say, "You take the bad with the good," which is what I did.

Miss Lula said, "You can have it." She did not answer my question, how ever.

"You know what's storax?" she said.

I said, "I do not."

She said, "Witch-hazel balsam. You know, you got hazel eyes your self. The green outer ring of your eyes is like green vines from the swamps out in the west of here. The brown in the center of your eyes is the same color as that baboon dung."

I liked it that Miss Lula was talking to me about my eyes. I liked it that she was looking in to them. It made me breathe faster. I liked it about the green in my eyes. I did not like so much about the brown in my eyes, so I said, "You are funning me."

Miss Lula put her hands on to mine. At that time, my heart was like to choke me, it swelled so much. She said, "Well of course I am, dear."

When Miss Lula was holding on to my hands with her hands at that time, I was feeling the skin that was on her hands. The skin that was on her hands was touching the skin that was on my hands. Then there were the knuckle bones and finger bones she had under the skin on her hands. I was feeling her bones rolling around in there, pressing down on the palms of my hands. Those hands she had were warm, and they were warming up my hands. The skin on those hands of hers was dry. I could feel the dryness and warmness of those hands of hers on my own cold, clammy ones. I ceased listening to what Miss Lula was saying to me at that time for a while. I was busy feeling her hands.

Then, she let go of my hands. My hands were feeling empty then. They were the most empty that they had ever felt. Then, I started listening to her again. She was saying, "Willy? Willy? Willy?"

I said, "Uh?" or some other word, or some other words, to the same effect.

Miss Lula said, "Are you listening to me?"

"I sure am," I said.

She said, "All right then. Now, you pound the mouse and the beetles and so on all together, and put the mash in a leaden box. When you want to use it, you get some of it. You make a fire out of some coals, you get yourself up to a high place, and then you wait until the moon is set to rise. Then, you make a burnt offering to the goddess Aktiophis. Then you say a prayer to her, which I am not going to tell you what it is. And then, abra ca dabra, the one you want will surely come to you.

"All of them things in the potion, each one is a potency. The ibis. The beetle. The mouse. They touch the magical side of this world we're in. The dung is the most powerful. Where we got dog teeth, a dog-faced baboon has got fangs, long and curved and sharp as scimitars. A dog-faced baboon has the strength of a panther. And it has a human soul. That is the strongest part of it.

"There was a boy about sixteen years old in the circus with us when I was a girl," she said. "He was a runaway, and he was good for nothing much except sweeping out the hay, shoveling after the elephants, and all like that. There was a couple of them dog-faced baboons with us in a cage, and he cleaned up after them too.

"These two baboons were an item. You know what I mean. All they ever did was eat and sleep and do the 'ates': defecate, urinate, expectorate, fornicate, and expostulate. Which I mean by that is, they were in a bad marriage. Fuck, and fight, and fuck some more. Their cage was too small. That's why all the fights, I believe. It was the mental anguish. All of the cages in our circus were small. There was never enough money for anything.

"It got nasty. They were tossing their poo around, and screeching like holy hell, and generally driving off the rubes. So Mister Apollo, he was the tent boss, he gets some iron collars, and some chains, and he chains those baboons to the bars on the roof of the cage. They were just close enough to each other that they could touch fingers. My swan. It rended my heart.

"One day, during a show, the she-ape was in heat. Hubbie went cockle doodle doo. He was throwing himself at her again and again, and getting himself wrenched back by that iron collar around his neck. It was horrible. Oh, my. You'd think it can't get much worse. But it did, you know. He couldn't reach her that way, so he tried another way. He swung himself up to the bars on the cage roof, and he slipped, and then he managed to fall down in just the wrong way. Broke his neck. There he was, poor fellow, dangling, while his wife set up this awful wail. A little boy in front who, he knew me from the tent show, he said 'Your monkey's dead.' As if I couldn't see.

"After that, the missus baboon didn't fight with anyone anymore. She had no-one to fight with. She had a hang-dog expression on her face all the time."

Miss Lula stopped talking and looked at me. After a while, she slapped my knee and said, "Will-eeee," just like that. It is a phonetic indication.

I knew I was supposed to say some thing, but my male reflex was acting up. I was trying to get it down again. Where she touched me on my knee, there was a spark, or a fire, or an electrocution, or some other thing along those lines. It was going from my knee, straight up my leg, to parts which I have not mentioned.

Miss Lula said, "Willy?"

I said, "Yes, ma'am."

She said, "You ain't paying attention to me."

I said, "Yes I am."

"Did I chase your dream away?" she said.

I said, "Yes, ma'am."

"Do you want to hear the rest of this?" she said.

"Yes, I do." It is what I said my self at that particular time.

Miss Lula said, "All right, then." She said, "The circus boy, his circus name was Atlas, because he wanted to be a strong man. He was lonely. You could tell, even if you were only nine years old as I was. He was yearning for a romance. One day, he was sweeping in front of the baboon cage facing 't other direction from the bars, and the widow reached out and got his belt in her fingers. Atlas struggled and surged against her grasp, but each one of her fingers had the strength of a man's whole arm. She dragged him up to the bars of the cage, and Atlas thought he was going to meet his end then and there. He thought the next thing would be her fingers on his throat, and crushing it, but it didn't come out that way. The widow had no such intention. What she did want, she made tolerably clear. That dog-faced baboon put her hands on Atlas's shoulders and pushed down on them. He got the notion and sat down on the ground where he'd just been sweeping. He had a cap on, which the widow baboon delicately removed and placed next to that circus boy on the dirt.

"Then, you know what she did?"

I said, "No, I do not."

"She began to groom him. She went all through his brown hair with her big fat fingers, plucking out nits and gnats and hayseeds. I didn't happen to see it the first time,

but word flew around camp soon enough. After a while, we all used to gather for the ritual. Most days, the two of them would get together, and she would groom him like that. After a while, he took to it, and he was grooming her as well. Soon enough, he was going in to the cage to do it, and we were charging admission.

"They must have had some trysts when no-one was looking, though, because, after some time, the widow gave birth to her only child. It wasn't a dog-faced baboon, either. It was a baboon-faced boy."

I said, "No," because I was astonished.

Miss Lula said, "Yessirree Bob." Then she started laughing at me. She laughed until she was coughing her cigarette cough.

Then my friend Assistant Professor Henry Shine came in to the kitchen, and he was rubbing his eyes. His hair was messed up. He said, "I smell coffee." That was the end of that talk we had in the kitchen.

I want to tell you some thing else. I want to tell you what I was astonished at, when I was astonished, when Miss Lula was telling me about the baboon-faced boy. I was not astonished at any old baboon faced boy. I am not a simpleton. I knew it was a whopper. I was astonished at Miss Lula her self. It was the way that she unfolds in front of a person that astonished me.

Chapter 9

Four women of Amherst.

There are several matters I could tell about the time when I became a scholar at Amazon State College. They are not to the point. "Keep to the point," Mister Maxwell Mentiroso has advised me. "Don't go off on tangents," he has advised me. "All ways advance the story," he has advised me. "And don't make anything up," he has advised me. I know that commandment. It was mentioned to me often in Red Hand Land, where I was a child. When I took a dime from my mother's purse, because I wished to go and get a Batman comic book, then she asked me, where is my dime. Then I said I did not know about the dime, then I was placed across my father's knee, then he reminded me of the commandment, of course. He reminded me of several commandments that way. His reminders were not all ways entirely logical, in my opinion at the time. Then, I might protest. For example, the commandment in question has in it a mention of my neighbor. When I said I did not know about the dime, I did not traduce that person. I did not mention him, or her, or it, at all. It was the pith of my argument, but my father was not persuaded. Then Exodus, chapter twenty three, verse nineteen, or, Exodus, chapter nineteen, verse twenty three, came across my mind. "You will not boil a kid in its mother's milk." It was not to the point, so I did not mention it at that time.

I suppose I am not obliged to tell the whole truth, for this reason. It is not possible. Here are some further reasons. I do not know all of it. There is not enough

time. It is boring. There are other reasons, of course. You are probably thinking of a few of them right now. I all so suppose that it is not possible to tell no thing but the truth. Here is one reason. I tell lies. I never confessed about the dime, for an example. So this is how I come out on it. I can not tell the whole truth. I can not tell no thing but the truth. All so, I contradict my self. It is evident. It is a great deal of trouble to write out this account of my self, so it is fair, it may be, that there is some trouble at your end as well. It is the case, I trow, fair or not.

Here is the up shot. I am leaving some matters out, such as, some other women. Before I found out that Miss Lula was my beloved, I pursued the affections of several of them. One of them was Miss Isabel. I will tell you about her, for this reason. It is to the point. It is not a tangent. I will not tell you about some of the other ones, such as my student of integral calculus, Miss Rosalind Till. I pursued her a week or two, until one day she fell off a bicycle and broke her head. She did not suffer death, but I lost my attraction to her at that time for some reason, or, for some other reason. Miss Rosalind Till asked me to have a party at the end of the term, one term. I did not have that party. I had Miss Rosalind Till on a date in stead. I did not have her on the date. I had the date. She wished me to have her, it seemed. She wished to have me, it seemed. We lay down on her bed. I did not know what to do, so I turned her radio on. I did not turn her on, how ever. After that I listened to her radio for a while, she stood up. It was the end of our date. I was chagrined and abashed, so, I asked her for an other date. To my surprise she said all right. The second date was at our house on Mudd. Assistant Professor Henry Shine and Assistant Professor Louis Morse laid a shining table. Doctor Sarah Ohm was at that table. She thought It was a scandal.

"It's a scandal," she said. Assistant Professor Louis Morse raised his eye brows. They were continuing a conversation, apparently. It continued after I arrived with Miss Rosalind Till, apparently. I was not sure what It was.

"Is it," he said.

"It's horrible," she said.

"Oh, I don't know," said Assistant Professor Louis Morse.

"There should be a rule against It," she said. I thought I might suspect what It was, then. I did not try to confirm my surmise how ever, for this reason. I was or am afraid of Doctor Sarah Ohm.

"Some day there will be I'm sure," Assistant Professor Louis Morse said. Then he and Assistant Professor Henry Shine made several jests at my expense. Those jests impugned my sophistication and masculinity. I do not remember those jests. The reason is this. They impugned my sophistication and masculinity. It is an other surmise.

When the dinner was over, I pushed back my chair and asked Miss Rosalind Till to accompany me up the Stair Way to Paradise. I did not say, Please come up the Stair Way to Paradise, of course. I did not mention Paradise. I conveyed my idea, how ever. Miss Rosalind Till dabbed her mouth with her silk damask napkin. So, I repeated my request. She said, "Whut would we do up there? Play the radio?" So, I desisted from that request. I offered to walk home with her in stead. "I got two feet I can take myself back on myself," she said. I accompanied her to the door way and watched her feet take her down Samuel Mudd M.D. Avenue. She had a long platinum colored pony tail at that time. I watched it swinging and shining in the street lamp light as she took her self away. After that she broke her head, she did not have her pony tail. She had a white bandage.

After she had her white bandage, she had a crew cut, such as a boy might have. I patted her on it one time. That was the time I came to pay her a call and found her in her bed with a young fellow, whom, I did not know that fellow. I should have telephoned in advance. I did not telephone, so I surprised her. So, she surprised me. I leaned over her bed and patted her. I did not pat the young fellow. I did not look at him. I only looked at her. It was my last look at Miss Rosalind Till.

I will not tell you very much about Miss Frances Cline, either. I will tell you some few items about Miss Frances Cline. For an example, she was a house mate of Miss Eileen Connell, who was the beloved person of my friend Mister Henry Shine, when he and I, and so on, were living on the island of Manhattan. Miss Eileen Connell was my particular friend. She was a thin person with thin skin. She was not thin skinned. Her skin was thin. You could see through it. This is what you could see. Veins. Her irises were blue and pale, like the irises painted on wooden dolls in the colony days. The rest of her was all so pale. You could say that she was fair. I am saying it. She was not the fairest of them all, how ever. That was Miss Lula, of course. I did not wish for her amorous affections, either. I did not often pursue those affections from persons beloved of my friends.

The only example of any thing close that comes to my mind is Miss Miriam Ohm. I have all ready brought forth my unfortunate Ohm facts. They are in Chapter Three. They are unfortunate facts in deed, for this reason. Those deeds were unfortunate. Those deeds were my deeds, unfortunately. Miss Miriam Ohm was not a beloved person of any friend of mine, her self. It is a close question, how ever. I asked Mister Henry Shine one time. I was doubting of it, so I asked him, "Are you going to sleep with Miss Miriam?"

She was flirting with him at the time. She was rivaling her sibling, it appears. "I won't kick her out of bed," he said, but she did not get in to his bed as far as I know. I do not know far, how ever.

My feelings for Miss Eileen Connell were not the same ones that troubled me about Miss Miriam Ohm. I wept tears of grief, pain, and sadness about Miss Miriam Ohm. I only wept a few sentimental tears of joy about Miss Eileen Connell. I can not tell you many details. I remember Mister Henry Shine and Miss Eileen Connell talking with me one night in my bed room in Perry Street. We were all in our night clothes and I stood on my head. I do not recall the reason, only that it was a gesture to do with philosophy, which was the subject Mister Henry Shine was concerned with, of course. I was conducting some clown activity at the time. Mister Henry Shine and Miss Eileen Connell produced some laughter at the time. After I conducted some clowning activity, Mister Henry Shine and Miss Eileen Connell left my bed room. I laid me down, and closed my eyes, and wept several sentimental tears of joy. The reason is, I liked it that I had my friends and so on. Now I am coming to my further point. Mister Henry Shine and I used to visit Miss Eileen Connell in the town of Amherst, in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, where she was studying at one of those colleges they have up there. Miss Eileen Connell lived with several other women in an old big house. One of them was Miss Joan Lett. An other one of them was Miss Clothilde Askew. Still an other one of them was Miss Frances Cline. I have mentioned her. They were interesting. I was interested in all of them. Miss Joan Lett was six feet tall. Her hair was carrot colored. She wore high leather boots. She and I would go to a movie such as Gone with the Wind. We would wait for Miss Scarlett O'Hara to say, "I'll never go hungry again." When she

said it, the music swelled, of course. Then Miss Joan Lett would turn to look me in the eyes with her mouth open. Then she would bulge her eyes at me. It was more humor, of course. I liked her, of course. She was too tall for me to lust after, how ever. Miss Clothilde Askew was the right size for me to lust after her. Miss Clothilde Askew was very lovely, in my opinion. She prided her self on her resemblance to Miss Emily Dickinson, the well known local poet. She brought out an illustration one day to show me the resemblance. Miss Clothilde Askew is much more lovely than that poet's portrait was, how ever. It is my opinion. I will not tell you any more details of her loveliness. I am not wanting to be distracted from the account of my misdeeds. Here is one of them. One day, Miss Clothilde Askew came to breakfast in a white night gown that opened in the front, for, she had left it open. Her stomach area was out in the open for all to see, so, I saw it. When I saw it, I was terribly interested in it. It was attractive. At that particular time, the stomach areas of women were more or less out side of my experience. Furthermore, Miss Clothilde Askew had her female area just below her stomach area, of course, and that morning, it all so was out in the open for all to see. So I saw it too, of course. I was even more interested in looking at Miss Clothilde Askew's female area than I was in looking at her stomach area. So I looked at it. Miss Eileen Connell was tracking my eye's gaze, I believe, so she saw me looking at the various regions of Miss Clothilde Askew. Here is the reason I believe it. Miss Eileen Connell is a wonderful clear soul, in my opinion. She is pure goodness all the way through. I believe it is in her blood. Who know where goodness comes from? Not I. Miss Eileen Connell's blood let her know in a snap, I believe, what to do about me and the wicked actions my eyes were doing. It was not to remonstrate with me, or to denounce me, or to embarrass me in any way. This is

what she did. Her eyes became particularly wide. Her lips paled to white. She leaned her body, which was clad in a white night dress its self, a modest night dress with ruffles around the collar of its neck hole, and more ruffles around its sleeve holes, so that no part of her was visible, except her head, of course. And her hands, of course. Her feet were visible as well, of course. Miss Eileen Connell interposed her self between my wicked gaze and the various parts of Miss Clothilde Askew I have told you of. She leaned over as a tree might lean over in a high wind, if that tree had a pale face, and wide, staring, worried eyes, staring at you the whole while. It was embarrassing. So, I was embarrassed.

I have only mentioned it in passing. I am not going to tell you any more about it, or much about the final woman in that house. She was Miss Frances Cline. I pursued her affections. It is the reason I have mentioned the four women of Amherst. Whiles I was up there with Mister Henry Shine one time, visiting Miss Eileen Connell, Miss Frances Cline told me that I was a nice fellow, and so on, and so forth. She laid it on. I do not recall any details of her effusions. I am susceptible to flattery, and that is what her effusions were. Miss Frances Cline liked me. Some one of her sex liking me is an unusual event. It was all that I needed to know. Loveliness was not in it. We corresponded by United States surface mail. In those times, there was no other kind of mail, unless I was here and you were across the ocean, or, the other ocean. Then there was air mail, of course. But there was no ocean between us, only certain misunderstandings, as the matters transpired, unfortunately. After some while, I was in Gum, in the land of Amazon, and she was still in Amherst, in the land of Massachusetts, so we were mailing our letters back and forth between those places. In the autumn of the

year 1975, I took my self to Massachusetts in an air plane. I did not have any time off from my instructor assignments, but I was in a state of urgency of some sort, or some other sort. So I took my self up there any way. Mister Henry Shine did not go with me. Miss Eileen Connell and Assistant Professor Henry Shine were no longer beloved persons at that time. Further more, he was busy with Miss Lula by that time, so he was reluctant to come face to face with Miss Eileen Connell. So he declined to come face to face with her. I took some of my grading work with me, to get it done on the air plane, but I did not get it done. I could not think about it. I was thinking about coming face to face with Miss Frances Cline. I was thinking her face and my face would be in a bed. My face would be looking down on her face, and I would be watching her face reflect all of her unimaginable ecstasies. I could not imagine Miss Frances Cline's future ecstasies when we would be fulfilling our desires together. I was trying to imagine them, how ever. It is what kept me from my grading work.

All of my imagining endeavors put me in to a particular state of mind when I arrived at the Logan International Airport. I was in the same state of mind while I was riding in the Peter Pan Lines bus. I was in it when I stepped off the bus in Amherst, in that land of Massachusetts, and there was Miss Frances Cline. She had a very pleasant face at that time. It was pleasant, for it was pleased. Miss Frances Cline's face was pleased to see my face, apparently. I wonder at times, what is her face like at this time? I do not have the information. My own face is older at this time. It is redder. It is older for this reason. This year is 2008. That year was thirty three years prior to this year, of course. My face is redder, for this other reason. Dry cold winds have been blowing across it for thirty three years. Time and winds have some thing in common, I find.

They both change your face. Miss Frances Cline's face is much older now as well, unless it is not much older, of course. In that case, her face is in an entirely different condition.

My state of mind was this. Unreasonable. There fore, I did unreasonable deeds. As soon as Miss Frances Cline and I got back to the house in Amherst, she had a telephone call. She leaned over the telephone whiles I watched her from the back. She was wearing a quilted nylon out door vest. I had never seen one of them before. I have seen a great many of those vests since that time. There are a great many of those vests in the land of Arctica, which is the land I am in at this time. After Miss Frances Cline was done with her telephone call, she turned around, so, I saw her face again. Her face was different at that time than it was prior to that time. There was no more pleasure in her face. There was ecstasy in it. It was not the ecstasy I had tried to imagine on my air plane ride. It was some other sort of ecstasy. I asked her what was up. "What is up?" I said.

She said, "Sal's here."

"Oh," I said.

"Yeah," she said. Her face looked bigger. It looked bigger and bigger all the time that we talked about her telephone call. It was ballooning up with ecstasy. Ecstasy was shining out of her eye balls. They were ballooning too, as it seemed to me, to make room for it all. Ecstasy can not be confined, apparently.

"What is the matter?" I said.

"Nothing the matter," she said.

It was her point of view. It was not my point of view. My point of view was this. I did not wish Miss Frances Cline to have some other sort of ecstasy at that time. I wished her to wait until her face and my face were in a bed. That ecstasy she was having had no thing to do with me. That is why it was the matter, from my point of view.

"Who is Sal?" I said. She did not reply. She just shined some more ecstasy from her eyes. They were aimed in my general direction, but they were not looking at me; they were just shining. So I said, "Frances?"

She said, "My brother. Oh Sal. I haven't seen him in years." Her eyes dimmed back down to a more usual level of brightness for a second or two. "Gotta go," she said. She started to walk away. Then she turned back and whispered, "Sorry, man. I had no idea he was getting out today. " The shine in her eye balls was walling up behind tears. She leaned over to me and kissed my cheek. Her kiss was cool and moist. It felt nice. She walked away. I was standing in her parlor, holding my valise and my back pack. She was walking out the door. I was not surprised. If our two faces had ended up in the bed, then I would have been surprised. I knew that on Sal's account our two faces were not going to do that. It is possible to believe in your thoughts that some thing is going to happen, with out you believe it, really. I have found it that way. This was the time I found it.

There is more to that story of the four women in Amherst. For example in some of that story, I am abusing my self, whiles lying on a cot in a kitchen pantry where I stayed that night. Then, in the morning of that story, I leave some Kleenex tissue, or some other brand of tissue, on the cot, which, I had used it to clean up my self. Then, Miss Joan Lett makes up the bed whiles I am sitting at breakfast and staring at Miss

Clothilde Askew's female parts, and Miss Eileen Connell is leaning between the two of us, the way she all ways did on those occasions, and Miss Joan Lett comes in to the kitchen and says, "What's this?" whiles she is holding up the tissue. I was surprised that she did not know what it was. How ever, I was so horripilated and embarrassed, that surprise was not my dominating emotion at that moment. If she knew what all items I myself did not know, I imagine that Miss Joan Lett would have been surprised as well.

In some more of that story, there is a talk I had with Miss Eileen Connell about Assistant Professor Henry Shine. Miss Eileen Connell lets on that she has seen him down in Cambridge recently. He went there for a conference. She knew he was going there, so she went there to bump in to him. I ask her how it was. I am looking at her skin. It is chalky. I am looking at her eyes. The expression in them hurts to look at it. She is looking at me too, of course, but I do not know what she is seeing. She does not look like she is seeing me. She looks like she is seeing Assistant Professor Henry Shine. Then she whispers some thing. This is what she whispers. She whispers this. "No pain." It has no misdeeds in it.

Chapter 10

I watch over her.

How I found out that Miss Lula was my particular beloved person, was not the same as it was at other times that a similar idea about a person has crept up on me. Miss Lula was an excellent friend of mine, prior to when I found out about the unfortunate change in my feelings, but other persons and I were not friends at the time I went in love with them. Missus Lighte, my algebra teacher when I was in the ninth grade, was a person of that sort. An other such person was a girl I did not know from Adam. I did not know her from any one else, either. I only knew her to look at. She was Miss Blossom Willow. I went in love with those two people one after the other. First, I went in love with Missus Lighte. Second, I went in love with Miss Blossom Willow. I am going to tell you about Miss Blossom Willow first, how ever. I am going to tell you about Missus Lighte in passing. It is my design.

Miss Blossom Willow was in my classes at Culptown Middle School in Red Hand Land. She knew me to look at, but she did not know me to talk to. I did not know her that way either. There fore, Miss Blossom Willow and I were not friends at that time. I did not think about her a great deal until we were lined up to go to lunch one day. We lined up by size, consequently, I was in front of her, and she was in back of me, for we had all most identical heights. We were standing by the door to the art room whiles we waited to issue in to the hall way, and I was looking at a water color painting on a piece of yellow paper. It was tacked to the wall to my left. I do not recall the image on the

yellow paper, for this reason. Some thing hard was pushing me on my right shoulder blade, to wit, Miss Blossom Willow's right brassiere cup. Her right breast must have been in side that cup. Miss Blossom Willow's right breast was softer than what was pushing on my right shoulder blade, it seemed to me at that time. It seems to me at this time all so. There fore, the hard pushing object on my shoulder blade was her brassiere cup, not her breast. Never the less, it disposed me to think about Miss Blossom Willow's breast from time to time in the sequel. Some time after that time, I was in my algebra class, and so was Miss Blossom Willow, for it was her algebra class as well. I truly loved our teacher Missus Lighte at that time. She made my heart beat faster when ever I did see her. When that is the case, and when you dream a dream about Missus Lighte on a blanket on the beach at the Boney Banks, in which she takes off her bikini, then she spreads her legs, then you see a flash of some sort of inconceivable light betwixt her legs, then you wake up, and your male parts are all gummed up, then, you are going to be aware of it, of course. Miss Blossom Willow resembled Missus Lighte in certain respects, but she did not resemble her in other respects. You can sort out the referents of those pronouns. Both of them were pretty. Missus Lighte was pretty in a medium sized, blond woman with round breasts way. Miss Blossom Willow was pretty in a short, dark curly hair, with very large brown eyes and very large in deed round breasts way. Both of them had remarkably round breasts. I have said it. Both of them were friendly to me, but Missus Lighte was friendly to me prior to when I dreamed about her, for some reason, or, for some other one, of course. Miss Blossom Willow was only friendly to me after I began my custom of staring at her. How I began that custom was as follows. We were in the algebra class. I have mentioned it. I was sitting at my desk on the right side of the

class room. Miss Blossom Willow was sitting at her desk on the left side of the class room. That room had tall windows in the wall. First, there was the wall, with the windows in it. Sun was shining level in the windows, for it was after noon. Then, there was Miss Blossom Willow. Her person was cutting out the sun light. I did not see her too well. I only saw a glow of white sun light around her silhouette. The breasts of it happened to be prominent that day. I had a thought, which was as follows. This was my thought. Blossom Of The Beautiful Breasts. When I had my thought, I came in to my feelings. First, an electric shock, such as, you are four years old or so, and you touch an open wire you have plugged in to a wall socket, to see what might happen, of course, then, next that you know the whole world is a blue spark, then, you are on your back on the other side of the room, and your mother is leaning across you, shaking your shoulders, screaming at you. Her face is going white, then red, then white again. The next feeling is this. Heart banging. Then it is just some general panting. My feeling for Miss Blossom Willow was similar. It was all so similar to my feeling about Missus Lighte, only I did not know it was going to happen, for I did not think about Miss Blossom Willow prior to that occasion. After it happened, I fell in to my custom of looking at her, so she got in to a custom of looking right back at me, but no matters came of it. Miss Blossom Willow's mother and father took her to Gum when the ninth grade was done, so I have not seen her in quite a while. I have not looked her up. I have looked her up on Google. She is not there. I do not know if she is any where. If she is some where, I imagine she might have a husband and some children by now. She might have some grand children. I do not know where they are, either.

I am going back to talking about Miss Lula at this time. I went from looking at Miss Blossom Willow, to loving Miss Blossom Willow, up to a point. It was the point where, or when, she left town. It was different from where I went to, and where I went from, when I was finding out about Miss Lula.

How I found out that she was my beloved person was this. She told me a terrible story. Before that, she was merely my good friend. For example, she taught me how to drive a stick shift with her other friend. That was Miss Cinnamon Askew. I have told you. They did not teach me to drive a stick shift with Miss Cinnamon Askew, of course. They just taught me to drive a stick shift, of course. They taught me several nights in the parking lot of a Winn Dixie store on Runaway Bill Avenue, a block or two from Miss Lula's house. We used to go up there about two or three in the morning, when the store was closed, when the parking lot was empty, more or less. I only hit an other car once. It was a dent on the driver's door of that car. We left it a note. I paid Miss Cinnamon Askew sixty dollars for her scratched Volvo car paint. I paid Mister Roland Examiner four hundred dollars for the dent in his door. Then, they taught me out on Hidden View Lane. That lane runs between Dammed Lake and Tuckabuckaway Farm, out side of Gum. Then, they taught me in the ditch that runs next to Hidden View Lane. That ditch is hidden from the lane, of course. It is why I drove in to it. After they taught me in the ditch, they taught me how to get out of the ditch. Push.

Miss Lula wished to teach me to drive cars for two or three reasons. I did not know how to do it. She wanted me to know how to do it. She was disposed in my favor, there fore, she wished to do me a favor. The reason I did not know how is, if you have been living on a farm in Red Hand Land from the time of your birth, then, you are

expected to learn how to do it fairly early in life, but I did not learn. The further reason is, my mother.

"Time to put him in the driver's seat," my father said to my mother when I was nine years old, one summer day, and he tilted his head at the tractor. My father was only a hobby apple tree farmer, being an attorney. However, he knew what was expected. Further more, he expected it him self.

"I don't think so," my mother said to my father at that time.

"Whut do you mean, you don't think so?" my father said to my mother, when she said, "I don't think so."

"I mean, I don't think so," she said back to him at that time.

My father's red face came out in some blotches, and his lips curled up around his ruff of nose whiskers, which, I have mentioned those whiskers, and he said, "Well why don't you think so?"

"He'll fall," my mother said.

My father looked up at the cab of that tractor. "Ain't that high," he said.

"Wait a year," my mother said, so my father waited a year, and I waited a year.

One summer day that I was ten years old in, my father said, "Time to put him in the driver's seat," an other time.

"It is not," my mother said, and tears rolled down her pretty apple cheeks.

"What are you doing?" my father said. "You ain't crying, are you?" he said.

My mother wiped off her tears and looked stubborn. "I have a right to my feelings," she said.

Both of my father's eyes glowed, then, or, at least, they seemed to, for the reason that he had retracted his eye lids a certain way. That particular way enlarged the visible surface areas on the whites of those two eyes, so they glowed, seemingly. Then, he grinned his wicked grin. He had several grins, one for each kind of occasion a lawyer of his sort, which was the jury pleading sort, might encounter. This was his wicked one. As I soon realized, the reason was, he saw his opportunity for a turn of phrase from his own favorite lawyer. Here is the turn of phrase.

"Feelings?" he said. "They's no feelings on this damn apple farm," he said. "Keep your damn feelings in the damn house," he said, which, it is all most just like Mister Jaggars in the well known work of the well known author, Mister Charles Dickens, namely, Great Expectations. My father idolized Mister Jaggars. "My model solicitor," he would say about that fellow.

Then my mother would say, "You miss the point of Mister Jaggars."

"Do I?" my father would say, and so on. They did not agree on lawyering, or on the meanings or intentions of Mister Charles Dickens, or on much of any thing else.

My father had his lawyer tricks, but my mother had her wife and mother tricks. I have found that a wife trick of my mother or a mother trick of my mother will beat a lawyer trick of my father. A fact of life is, even an other lawyer's lawyer trick often beat my father's lawyer tricks. My father was not especially successful as an exponent of his profession, unfortunately. He was no good at tricks.

"He's still small," my mother said. It is a mother trick of hers. My father gave in. He normally gave in, when my mother disagreed with him about some item about my up

bringing. He normally gave in about any up bringing matter, excluding matters of corporal punishment and sexual education.

He went on giving in on that driving matter, year in and year out. She would all ways tell him that I was too small. It is true that I never turned in to a particularly large fellow. Never the less, once I was of a certain age, I am sure I could have handled that tractor with out I fall off it. I never did handle it, how ever. I never learned to drive at all before Miss Lula and Miss Cinnamon Askew got in to my business.

I am going to classify my father and mother's matters now, just by the way, as it has occurred to me. What my father normally governed, was matters of corporal punishments, sexual education, politics, paying bills, shopping for every thing but clothing, and farming chores. What my mother normally governed, was matters of medical care, up bringing, excluding corporal punishment, matters of education, excluding sexual education, and matters of religion, paying visits, shopping for clothing, and house hold chores.

When I say Normally, I have in mind certain exceptions, such as the time that my mother came in to my bed room and sat on the bed. "I want to talk to you about something," she said.

"All right," I said.

"You are eleven years old now," she said.

"Uhh huh," I said, for this reason. I was eleven years old.

She said, "Your puberty is coming."

I said, "No it is not," for this reason. It was not coming yet.

My mother's eyes roved about my room. This is what she could see. My bed, of course. It was a bunk bed. It was a bed room, of course. I slept in the top bunk. My brother Wally slept in the bottom bunk. My desk, with some papers, and pencils, and a mail order make it your self crystal radio, which, I made that crystal radio my self. An aquarium. There was water in it, and a light, and an air pump, and guppies, and a perforated sheet of plastic down the middle of it to do my psychological experiments. I was experimenting psychologically. My guinea pigs were my guppies. It is not a paradox, of course. It only sounds like a paradox, of course. My guppies were, it seems to me, not as good at threading a maze as Assistant Professor Joel Mercy's mice turned out to be some what later. His mice were his own guinea pigs. All so, I did not ever guillotine my guppies, or dice their brains. Those procedures were beyond my imagination at that time. Other items in that bed room that my mother could see were these. A poster Scotch Taped™ to a wall from Time-Life Books™ that depicted the solar system in fabulous living color. It was my particular poster. Three or four plastic models of U.S. Air Force fighter planes, such as the F-86 fighter plane. They were Wally's fighter planes. A set of drums, but it was broken. I used to play those drums, but Wally opened the door on those drums, one time, and the door knob tore in to the biggest drum. You could not play it after that. I could not play it after that either. So, I did not play it.

At this juncture, I am pressed for some reason, or some other reason, to venture on to one of my side tracks. My brother Wally died some time ago. He was twenty three years old at the time. He was having some tea at a tea pagoda in Saigon. That was the fourteenth day of July in the year 1973. The day was a Monday. A child asked him for

some thing. He reached in to his pocket to get it for the child. I have no further details about that transaction. My details are about the next event that happened, which, the child pulled the pin of his grenade. Wally's foot blew off. It did not hurt. The child blew up entirely. It did hurt, I imagine. I do not know. Then, Wally went to an infirmary. Then, he got some gangrene. It hurt. He wrote a letter which, it told me so. I knew it all ready for this reason. My foot hurt. Then, Wally died of his gangrene. It was the sixth day of August. It was a Wednesday. My foot stopped hurting. My brother Wally was my identical twin brother, but identical twins are not identical at all. It is obvious. One of them is alive at some time. One of them is not alive at the very same time, at times. This one has died of his gangrene, while the other one, he never had his gangrene. One of them can not have the other one's gangrene. He, namely, I, did not have any body's gangrene. Consequently, those twins do not share all of their attributes. Consequently, they are not identical. It is obvious. All so, it is the doctrine of the identity of indiscernibles. You can find it in Wikipedia. I myself did not find it. I heard it. Here is whom I heard it from. Mister Louis Morse and Mister Henry Shine, of course.

"Do you have magazines in here?" my mother said. I have said what she could see, but she was wondering what she could not see, of course.

"Whut magazines, Ma?" I said.

"You know what magazines," she said. I did not know what magazines, before she said, "You know what magazines." I knew after she said it, how ever.

"Nuh uh," I said. "I am eleven," I said.

"Pull down your pants a little," she said, and she reached for my belt buckle. I scrambled back away from her. "I only want to see if you're in your puberty or not," she said.

"Ma, come on," I said.

"What about your gym class friends? In the shower?" she said.

I said, "Ma."

She put her hands up, and wiggled her fingers, and wagged her head, as if to say I was being ridiculous. "All right," she said. Then she, "Now you listen. Do you ever have a funny feeling down there?"

"Ma, stop it," I said.

She said, "Because if you do, listen to me. Are you listening to me?" I looked away and shook my head. "Are you?" she said. I put my fingers in my ears. I put one in each. I put my left index finger in my left ear. I put my other index finger in my other ear. My mother tugged on one of my elbows. Which elbow, I do not remember. One index finger came out of one ear on the side of that particular elbow. So I gave up, and I took my other index finger out of my other ear. "Listen, this is very important," she said. "If you have a funny feeling down there, I want you to do two things. Are you listening?" I would not look her in her eye. I shook my head to say No. "I know you are, Willy," she said. "First," she told me, "Do not do anything about that feeling, hear me?" I shook my head No another time. "I know you hear me," she said. "Second thing is, if you have a feeling down there, I want you to run to me quick and let me know. That's what I want from you," she said. "Promise me," she said. "Do you promise?" she said. I shook my head No, and she was exasperated with me. "You are exasperating,"

she said. "I know you'll do it," she said, and she kissed my fore head as I pulled away from her, but I never did, of course.

An other exception was when my brother Wally was up set, one year later. We were twelve years old by then, of course. I was practicing self abuse in my Up Town bunk bed. We called my bunk bed, Up Town. We called Wally's bunk bed, Down Town. I was practicing my self abuse, and the bunk beds were shaking, both of them. So, Wally was up set, and he told on me. My mother came to the bed room in her frilly yellow apron, one day, while I was using fish food for teaching my guppies to come through the perforations when I turned on the light in the aquarium. I never did teach them to do it. I was sprinkling some food on the water, and my mother slapped my hand away. The whole card board box full of sea mites of various kinds fell in to the water, which filled with a murky cloud, and those guppies just went in to a frenzy. "What have you been doing?" screamed my mother. I backed up, and she knocked me on to Down Town with one punch. Where it came from I do not know, but she had a scissors in her other fist, raised up in the manner of the fellow wielding a steak knife, or, some other knife, in the well known movie Psycho. Down it came, slice, in to Wally's mattress. I scrambled further back, and up and down that scissors came again, slice, slice, slice – three more cuts in the mattress. My mother's eyes were two balls bulging out white in the middle of her ugly pink face and crazy black hair. Her lips were pulled back, which, on them, spit frothed. Her teeth showed. They were white all so. I do not know how long the matter lasted. Slice slice, slice slice, and I, scrambling and dodging. Later on, she told me that

she was only trying to teach me a lesson. There were nineteen slices in Wally's mattress, how ever. We had to get him an other one.

It is an other exception to the rules about which one governed what matter. How ever, that was the first time my mother went in to the insane asylum. She begged him, but my father would not give in on it, what though it was a matter of medical care. It is still an other exception. Now I am done with the governing side track.

The practical reason that Miss Lula wanted me to learn to drive cars is, she wanted me to drive her friend, Miss Isabel, from Gum to Fort Lee, in the State of New Jersey, at Easter time. Fort Lee is in New Jersey all year long, of course. Miss Isabel had people there. I imagine that they are still there, but does she still have them? I do not know. Miss Lula wanted me to obtain the use of a car and get Miss Isabel and Miss Dee Light Brown up to Fort Lee for Easter in it. There fore, I must know how to drive it. There fore, I must learn how to drive it. It was a scheme. I imagine that Miss Isabel put her up to it, or, that she thought it up her self. I imagine that she may have wished to do Miss Isabel a favor of her own. The reason she wanted to do me a particular favor is what I have told you. She was disposed to do me favors. One reason she was so disposed is, my friend Assistant Professor Henry Shine mentioned one, or two, or more items about me, such as, he liked me, perhaps, or, I was a fine fellow, perhaps, or, I was a funny fellow, perhaps, or, some other item, perhaps. He had several opportunities to mention such items whiles the two of them were speaking in muffled tones, I imagine. I often heard their muffled tones on the other side of my bed room wall. The first time, it was a happen stance. It just stood to happen. I was lying in my bed, on my side of my bed room wall. They were in the room on the other side of my bed room wall. That

other room was Assistant Professor Henry Shine's room. I was not thinking about any thing in particular to do with them. I was thinking about some item to do with my scholarship. I did not have a scholarship. I was engaged in scholarship. While I was having my thoughts of scholarship, I heard some muffled tones. After some time, the tones were less muffled. After more time, they were unmuffled. They were a variety of moans, groans, screams, gasps, yawps, and yelps at that time. After that, I was all ways interested when ever I heard them start to speak in their muffled tones. I listened to them, so, I heard them. It was not happen stance.

An other reason that Miss Lula was so disposed was, I stayed up with her one time. I imagine it. No one knows the mind of an other person, of course, but, at times, I imagine the mind of an other person, such as Miss Lula's mind. This was a time of that kind.

Assistant Professor Henry Shine and she had engaged in a dispute of some sort. It was an unhappy sort. Miss Lula was unhappy. Assistant Professor Louis Morse and I were sitting at the dining room table. Dinner was over, so we were not dining any more. Assistant Professor Louis Morse was quaffing his postprandial Beefeaters gin in a plastic cup, as was his wont. I was quaffing my postprandial milk with Hershey's Chocolate Syrup dissolved in it, in a glass, as was my wont. We were discussing a matter of opinion. I wanted to know why he called his students Boys And Girls all the time. When I asked him it, he said, "It's a matter of opinion." I heard him call them that two or three times on the occasions that I was picking up pointers. I was teaching classes of some sort my self, which I had not done before. One of my classes had its meetings in the building of the Department of Philosophy and Mysticism. That is where Assistant Professor Louis

Morse taught his classes as well, for this reason. They were philosophy and mysticism classes. Mine were not, how ever. At some time, I may recall what mine were. If I do, I will put it in here. I remember some thing, which, perhaps, is an indication. There were equations on the black board. It was not a black black board. It was a green black board. I all ways am excited at the sight of an equation, but any thing beyond two and two is a stumper for me, these days. I have lost some equation wits. They are pretty to look at, how ever. Equations are pretty. Wits are not pretty. For example, Assistant Professor Louis Morse.

The first day, or the second day, that I taught my class in the Department of Philosophy and Mysticism's building, I asked a person in it a question. I asked a person in my class. She was in the building as well, but it is not to the point. If I asked a person in the building a question who, she was not in my class, why, she would not have heard me ask it, of course. The person in question was about eighteen years of age. The question in question stumped her clean. May be, it was an equation. So, I thought I would give her a hint. I asked her an other question. It was a leading question. It is called the Socratic Method, but that person was not led any where except to tears. She did not answer my second question, so I asked her a third question, and so on. I do not recall how many questions I asked. After one of my questions, she began to snuffle a bit. So I came closer to her, and I said, "It is okeh," then, I asked her an other one. I just did not have the feel of it. The person scowled at me. Scowling is when your eye brows curl like two fists, and they knock together, and you look like an owl does, perhaps, at least, it is what came to my mind when she scowled at me. After she scowled at me, she said, "Asshole." After she said, "Asshole," then she slammed her hands on her desk. After she

slammed her hands on her desk, she wept her tears. They made white tracks on her peach fuzz. That fuzz was on her cheeks. They were peachy cheeks. After she wept her tears, then, she got up and walked off. I do not know her name. I thought, Uh Oh. I thought, I Am Cooked. I thought, I Need Some Pointers. So I went home. Then, I asked Assistant Professor Louis Morse for some pointers.

He said, "Come to my God 101 tomorrow. Nine oh five a.m. in Father Divine Hall, room one twelve."

So I went to room one twelve in that building. I arrived in it at approximately eight fifty seven ante meridiem on the day in question. The day was the eleventh of November in the year 1975. It was a Tuesday. That room was empty and I sat in a chair in the last row. Sooner or later, the people drifted in. Male persons did not wear their base ball caps back wards on their heads at that time. They did wear their base ball caps on their heads, how ever. Most of the base ball caps were Amazon Panther caps.

Amazon State College has several athletic teams. They are the Amazon Base Ball Panthers, the Amazon Basket Ball Panthers, the Amazon Ice Hockey Panthers, and so on, and so forth. They are all named for the same panther. It is in Misery Swamp. It is approximately three hundred eleven years and four months old, if you count back from today, which is the twentieth day in March, in the year 2008. It is the first day of spring. The snow is gone from the roofs. I have seen that Misery panther. When I saw it, was when Miss Lula and my self were paddling our wherry like two demons. It was dark, but the moon was out. I saw two crescent moons in the eyes of the panther. It was watching us go by from behind a loyal sarsaparilla bush. That is a bush that grows only in one place. The place is Misery Swamp, of course. We have excellent sarsaparilla pop in the

land of Amazon, only it is expensive. You have to get by the panther to get to the beans. I am going to tell you more about that panther when the time comes. The time has not come. Now I am going back to room one twelve. The male students who were wearing base ball caps forward, and the female ones who were not wearing them forward, or any direction, came in to it, before Assistant Professor Louis Morse came in to it. He all ways waited to make an entrance. "All ways wait until the place is full, then make an entrance," he said one time. It is a pointer.

When Assistant Professor Louis Morse came in to the class room, he did not come all the way in. He leaned his head in to the door way, so his goatee came in first. His goatee is rather stiff and prominent, so, whiles his head was turning this way and that way on the other side of the door way, his goatee was doing the same motion on this side of the door way. We all laughed on this side of the door way. On the other side of the door way, I do not know what they were doing. The back side of a man in a three pieced suit is not as funny as a goatee looking around at a class room, I imagine. I imagine they did not do any thing in particular about it. After his goatee was done looking at us, Assistant Professor Louis Morse brought the rest of him self in to the class room. He set his leather school bag on the steel desk at the front of it. He pulled his gold watch out of his watch fob. He put that watch on the desk. With his blood shot eyes, Assistant Professor Louis Morse looked at various people, but he did not smile. He did not frown, either. He did not do any thing but look. He did not look at me, how ever. Then, Assistant Professor Louis Morse said, "Good morning boys and girls," in the deepest voice.

Every person in there but me, it seemed, replied, "Good morning, Doctor Morse." I was surprised, for several reasons. One reason is, of course students do not generally do it, if they are in a college. If they do it, they are generally in a grade school, I believe. An other reason is, Assistant Professor Louis Morse was not a doctor at that time. He was not a doctor of philosophy. He was not a doctor of any thing. He is not a doctor at this time either, as far as I know. I do not know far, how ever.

Then Assistant Professor Louis Morse said, "Today we will consider one more asinine reason to believe in God." I was surprised again, of course. I will not enumerate the reasons. They are evident, I imagine. "It is an argument from pure reason," he said. "The ontological argument," he said. "Who can summarize Anselm's version?" he said, but no one answered. So Assistant Professor Louis Morse leaned all the way over his desk and lowered his head down to his gold watch. He stared at it a while. It was ticking. You heard it tick. It ticked a while. Then, Assistant Professor Louis Morse straightened him self up. He said, or he sang, "Hello-oh. Hello-oh. I don't hear you." Some more time ticked by. Then he said, "I did not say 'the otological argument'. I said 'the ontological argument'. How y'all ears today?" Which, it made two or three of those people laugh an other time. "Ahh," Assistant Professor Louis Morse said. "Pre-med is present and accounted for," he said. "Doctor Mangione," he said.

A fellow in the room said, "Yes sir."

"Are you present and accounted for?" Assistant Professor Louis Morse said.

"Yes sir," the fellow said.

"You don't mind being put upon, do you?" Assistant Professor Louis Morse said.

"Put?" the fellow said.

"The spot," Assistant Professor Louis Morse said. "Put upon the spot," he said.

"Can I pass?" the fellow said.

"Possibly. But only if you will summarize Anselm's argument for us," Assistant Professor Louis Morse said.

"That isn't what I meant," the fellow said. Every one laughed at his remark except Assistant Professor Louis Morse. Assistant Professor Louis Morse kept his face poker. I have played poker with him. It was his poker face.

He said, "I know," and every one laughed at that one too.

I had a thought at that time. This is what I thought. These people are easily amused. But I had an other thought. Here it is. No one laughs at my particular jests. So I thought, Listen Up Willy. So I did. I am not going to relate it all. It is not about my awe full deeds, so I will leave the rest of it out of here.

So I asked him. "Why do you do that?" I asked him. We were at the dining room table. I am back there again. I am going to come all the way around. Before you know it, I will be all the way back to Miss Lula and Assistant Professor Henry Shine having a dispute, and so on. I am not all the way there yet, how ever. I am up to where Assistant Professor Louis Morse said, "It's a matter of opinion." He is going to say it in the next paragraph, not in this one. You can not quote two persons in one paragraph. It is a rule Mister Maxwell Mentiroso has told me. Here I go.

"It's a matter of opinion," Assistant Professor Louis Morse said.

"How many opinions are there on it?" I said. Assistant Professor Louis Morse looked at me and made a speculating expression upon his face, so I said, "Whut are you speculating on?"

"You're full of questions this evening," he said.

At that particular point, Miss Lula came down the stairs from paradise. She was dragging a blanket. It trailed behind her, so it reminded me of a bridal train. It was not a bridal train. It was blue. Those bridal trains are generally white. It was a blanket. Those bridal trains are generally not blankets. It is obvious. Any way, she was dressed in her usual blue jeans. She was not dressed in a bridal gown.

Miss Lula said, "I'm sick." It sounds like Om Suyik when she says it. I am reminding you.

Assistant Professor Louis Morse said, "I'm late." He tugged out his gold watch from his watch fob, then he showed us it. He showed us his watch. He did not show us his fob. We all ready saw his fob.

"What for?" I said.

Assistant Professor Louis Morse said, "Can't a feller go get some poon tang roun' here without his buds butt in?"

I did not answer him for this reason. I was embarrassed, but Miss Lula answered him. She said "You hound. It's Tuesday."

Assistant Professor Louis Morse said, "You sound awful."

"Same way I feel," Miss Lula said.

"Yes," Assistant Professor Louis Morse said. "Well," he said. "Get some rest," he said.

Miss Lula said, "I am going to. You ought stay here and do the same. I need some company. You got Ghosts in the mawnin."

Assistant Professor Louis Morse repeated him self. He does not often do it. He said, "Yes, well," an other time. Then he frowned. Then he tapped his gold watch an other time. He said, "Hot butt waits for no man."

"You a fool," Miss Lula said in a grumpy manner. She threw her blanket on to a divan that was in the parlor.

Assistant Professor Louis Morse is a some what touchy fellow. He straightened up at that time. He raised up his eye brows. Then he said, "That is as it may be, my dear."

"No, you ain't a fool," Miss Lula said. "You the ghost of a departed fool," she said.

"Inapposite," Assistant Professor Louis Morse said, or, snapped. He walked up to the door of the house. It was in the front of the parlor. I ought tell you. The parlor communicated with the dining room. It is why I could sit in my chair in that dining room, and see all of this, and hear all of this.

Assistant Professor Louis Morse looked back at Miss Lula and my self in the open door way. He said, "I am a departing fool." Then, he departed.

Miss Lula looked at the blanket. "I got to lie down," she said. Then she unbuttoned her shirt. "Don't look," she said. She unzipped her blue jeans and pulled them down. So, her legs were uncovered. I had not seen Miss Lula's legs prior to that time. She told me not to, but I was looking at them any way. May be that I might have kept my self from looking with some time on my side, but the way it happened, first I am seeing her standing there wearing her blue jeans, then, I am seeing her standing there with out she is wearing those blue jeans. Time did not intervene between those two

events, so, I was looking. Here is what I was looking at. A brassiere. Thighs. I can not describe their beauty. I mean her thighs, not her brassiere. Brassiere is singular. Pink panties. I had not seen pink panties with a woman in them, prior to that time. I had not seen any color panties with a woman in them. Miss Lula's female area. I saw that area through her panties. As you know, I had seen one of those before.

At that time, some thing happened in my mind.

"Willy," Miss Lula said. She pulled up the blanket from the divan and she hid her self. "What you doing?" she said. "You making me shy," she said.

I said, "Excuse me." I cast down my eyes. I was not missing any thing now any way.

"Maybe I will," Miss Lula Smith said. "Maybe I won't," she said.

"I am sorry," I said.

Miss Lula said, "No you ain't." Then she sat down on the divan. "I feel just like Lady Liberty," she said. Then she laid her head on the pillow. "This thing is too small," she said.

"I will get you one," I said. I went up the stairs to my room. I did not go up the stairs to paradise. When I go up them, I am not going to paradise. I am going to the water closet, or I am going to my bed room. I went to my bed room. I took up my own pillow. Then I went to a linen closet we had up there. I changed the pillow case. Then I brought my pillow down stairs. Miss Lula looked at me and she said, "You changed the case." It was then I noticed that I was still holding the old pillow case.

I said, "Yes, ma'am."

"You sweet," Miss Lula said. "I'll have it," she said. She reached up and I put my pillow in to her hands. "Thank 'ee," she said. She puffed it and patted it and laid her head on it. She closed her eyes. "It is soft," she said. "Don't go away," she said, so, I did not go away. I sat down in an arm chair next to her head. She said, "I sad," then she said, "Stay here." So I did, but I got up to put the lights out. After I put the lights out, I sat down by her head again. It was a new moon. The only light was from a street lamp out side the parlor window, pale silver. Miss Lula looked that way. Pale silver. Her lips were dark, how ever. Her eye lids were dark. The parlor was dark, so I was looking at her in the dark. I was watching over her. I thought it: I Am Watching Over Her. The thought of it brought tears in to my eyes. The reason is this. This is the reason. I had not watched over a person, before I watched over Miss Lula.

Chapter 11

A terrible story of Miss Lula.

My ill deeds, which are many, tear at my spirit. Your spirit is your breath. I have read it. When I am remembering an ill deed that I have done, I can not breathe. My breathing muscle stops. It is worrying. This is what I worry. Your Breath Is Not Going. You Had Better Start It Up Again. I am not a You, am I. I am an I. I am I. A Person Needs Air. I remind my self. It is babble. My nerves strain when I am suffocating, so I babble at such a time. It is babble mode. "You're in babble mode." Mister Louis Morse said it often. All so, Assistant Professor Louis Morse said it. He was one, then, he was the other. Now, he is not the other. He is, may be, no thing any more. It is an other worry of mine. It takes my breath away. Where have you gone, Joe Dimaggio. It is a jest.

I am going to retail a terrible story of Miss Lula. She told it. I am ashamed about the story. I do not know why. I am not in it. Here is an other one of my shames. I like arm pits of women awe fully well. It is a fetish. It is not a side track. Just hold on a while. Or, bear with me a while. Assistant Professor, or Mister, Louis Morse used to say, "Bear with me." I do not like to bring an animal in to it, how ever. It is bad enough all ready. I feel that some thing is wrong with a fetish. I do not know what is wrong with one. I learned my fetish when I was ten years old. I was reading a Life Magazine. It was about the slave ships. I was looking at the illustrations. Some slaves were in a slave ship.

They were lying in their chains between the decks. Their arms were pulled over their heads. They were bound in shackles. The women were naked. The men were naked as well, but it is not the point, apparently. I began to look more at the arm pits of the women than at any of their other parts. My male part had a reflex at that time. It made me ashamed. It is how I learned my fetish. As you may recall, my mother had advised me about the times that I will get a feeling in my male parts. That advice was designed and determined to prevent my falling in to the practice of self abuse, of course. I did not follow up her advice. In stead, I started to practice. I started when I was looking at the slave women in the Life Magazine, so, it was too late when my mother advised me on the issue.

Why I am telling you about my avid feelings for women's arm pits is this. Miss Lula came in to my bed room. The day was the sixteenth of November in the year 1975. The day was a Sunday. Rather, the evening was a Sunday, for it was evening when Miss Lula came in to there. It was eight twelve post meridiem, more or less, so it was an evening at that time. Miss Lula looked unhappy. She had been looking that way since Tuesday. I have told you about it. I did not see her between those days, so it may be that I am wrong about it. When Miss Lula looked unhappy at that time, this is how she looked. Her hair was not shining. Her face skin appeared to be chalky. Chalk appeared to be on it. Chalk was not on it, of course. It was an appearance. Her face skin is rather creamy, or, it is rosy, when she looks happy, or when she does not look unhappy. Either one. It is an appearance as well. Miss Lula did not put roses on her self, to my best knowledge, but she did put cream on her self. One is an appearance. The other is not one, but it might as well be one, for creamy skin is a metaphor, of course. It refers to

cream from the top of a can of milk. It does not refer to face cream, of course. Miss Lula some times had both of those creams on her face, but she only had one of those creams on her face when she came in to my room. It was the face one. It was not the milk one. An other item of her appearance was within my notice when she came in to my bed room. She had a hitch. She hitched when she took a step. Then she dragged her left foot, then, here comes the hitch again. She came on in there rather slowly and pale. It was not silver pale. It was chalk pale. Her lips were pale. You might say that they were bloodless, but I will not say it. A person all ways has blood in his lips, or, her lips, with out that person is dead, of course. Then, he, or she, or it, has blood in his, or her, or its lips any way. It is dead blood, then, until the person's corpse has moldered away, of course. Then, the person has no blood left at all, of course. There fore, Miss Lula did have some blood in her lips, but I did not see any of it. Her lips did not look as white as snow. It has snowed here again, so I am looking at some, but her lips did make me think that word *white*, so I said it. "Your lips look white, Miss Lula," I said.

Miss Lula said, "An other county heard from."

I said, "Whut?"

"Don't mind," she said. "I got to ask you for a favor," she said. She looked at me as if she is waiting for some thing. "Ain't you going to ask me anything?" she said.

I saw some blood on her tooth. It was her left canine tooth. It is a sharp tooth on her, but it was dry blood. May be that she had bit some thing or some one with her sharp tooth. I doubted it. I surmised that she was bleeding in her mouth of late, so I asked her. "Have you been bleeding in your mouth?" I said.

Miss Lula rolled her tongue in her mouth. She said, "Mmm." Then, she waited some more.

"Does it hurt?" I asked.

Miss Lula said, "I am going to sit here." Then, she sat next to me on my bed. She folded her self down slowly, like an old woman. She was not one, of course. She was twenty four years old or so. I my self was about twenty five years old or so. Just so you know it. Miss Lula said, "Dang."

"How did you hurt your mouth?" I said.

"I didn't do that," she said. "My mouth don't hurt," she said.

I said, "You look like it hurts."

She said, "Something hurts."

I said, "May be that you have bit your self."

Miss Lula rolled her shoulders up and down. It is A Shrug when you read it, but it is rolling your shoulders when you see it. She said, "I got bit, anyway."

"Who bit you?" I said.

Miss Lula laughed at me. Then she looked at me. Then her eyes became round. Then she pursed her white lips. "Willy," she said. She patted my knee once. "I'm sorry," she said.

I said, "I do not mind."

She looked at me a while. "It does hurt though," she said.

"Whut hurts?" I said.

Miss Lula looked at me some more. She said, "I will tell you in a while."

I said, "All right."

Here is where I get to my fetish matter. Miss Lula said, "I got an itch up here." She touched her arm pit. It was her left one. It had a poultice on it, so I could not see it. I could see her poultice. I could not see her arm pit. "This needs changing," she said. "It needs washing too," she said.

I said "All right," an other time.

"You and Master Joshua Oleander the only ones here," she said. "He won't help, and I can't do it by my self," she said.

I said, "I will help."

She said "I got to take my shirt off." She said, "I'm sorry for it."

I was not sorry for it. I did not tell her, how ever. If I had said It Is All Right or some other similar words at that time, I feared that she had laugh at me again. But I thought of some thing to say, so I said it. "What is wrong there?" I said.

Miss Lula said, "A boil."

"That is the hurt?" I said.

"It itch," she said. "It don't hurt," she said. "It stings a bit. I want you to wash it," she said.

"All right," I said.

She said, "Thank 'ee." Then, she stood up again, ever so slowly.

"Whut is it that hurts?" I said.

Miss Lula only said, "Let's go in there." She was nodding towards my other door. I had an other door in my room. That one was shut. It was all ways shut. It was blocked from opening. What blocked it was, my book case. That case had two shelves. It was piney wood, painted black. It had my Letters of John Keats, Hyder Rollins, ed. Harvard

University Press, on it. It had some other books on it as well. I do not have any of those other ones any more, but I have that one. It is two books. It is in a lovely card board box. The other side of that door behind that book case was the second storey water closet. It had no bath in it. It had a toilet. It had a sink. That is all it had, except, cock roaches. Our house had a great many cock roaches. I am going to tell you about them. I am going to tell you later. Miss Lula and I did not go in to the water closet through the shut door. We went in to the hall. Then we went in to the water closet an other way. It was the usual door of a water closet, of course.

Miss Lula pulled out some cotton, and a scissors, and some bandage tape on a roll, from her pocket book. She handed those matters to me. She started to unbutton her blouse. It was white, with frills. It was tucked in to her blue denim jeans, so, when she got that far in her buttons, she unbuttoned the brass button at the top of those jeans. My heart was kicking. I was not breathing well, but was it a shamed feeling, or was it some other feeling, I am not certain. It was both of those feelings, I imagine. Miss Lula looked down at her buttons, then she looked at me. I was breathing my difficult way. Then she down looked at her buttons some more. She began to shake her head. Then, she buttoned up her brass button again. Then she buttoned up her other buttons. She said, "I don't think so." She did not look up. She just looked down at her buttons. "I'll wait for Henry to get back," she said. She whispered, "God damn." I did not hear her very well, for two reasons. She was whispering. A noise was in my ears. Miss Lula gripped on to the sink with one of her hands and lowered her self on to the toilet seat. The lid of it was down at that time. She bit her lip. It cut, and some blood came on to it. I told you. She did have blood in her lips. I knew it.

A pain came in to my own lip. I said, "Your lip is cut."

Miss Lula licked her lips.

"Miss Lula, whut is wrong with you?" I said.

She said, "Besides I am dumb as a rock, you mean."

"No," I said.

"I am," she said.

I did not know what to say first. No You Ain't, which was the truth. Or What Is Hurting You? which is what I meant by my words Whut Is Wrong With You, of course. I chose the latter one. "Whut is hurting you?" I said.

Miss Lula looked at me, licking her lip and licking her lip, for it was bleeding copiously at that time. "What I do?" she said. She went to pulling on the roll of toilet tissue, then patting her lip with the toilet tissue, then tossing that toilet tissue in to a waste basket that was there. It was a wire basket wrapped in a translucent paper with a clown and a faery on it. The faery was charming the clown with a wand that had a spark on the end of it. It was the business end of that wand, I imagine. The clown had his eyes round and his mouth open, to signify his fear, I imagine. That clown and that faery, they were on that waste basket several times. I counted three of them apiece, but I could not see the other side of the waste basket. May be that there were six clowns and six fairies all together.

I said, "You ought have some ice."

"Please," Miss Lula said. I went down the stairs to the kitchen. I passed the door of Assistant Professor Louis Morse's bed room on the first floor. It is the floor with the parlor on it and so on. That bed room is on the left side of the landing of those stairs,

when you are coming down the stairs. It is on the other side of them, when you are coming the other way. Master Joshua Oleander was sleeping under a blue blanket on Assistant Professor Louis Morse's bed. I came back up the stairs with some ice. It was in a coffee cup which I handed to Miss Lula, the very which, she passed a cube of it across her lips. That ice cube came away bloody. Miss Lula rinsed it in tap water and passed it over her lips an other time. She said, "Yooey."

I was worrying about her. "I am worrying about you," I said.

Miss Lula said, "I am going to tell you something."

"All right," I said.

"You best sit," she said.

There was no chair in that water closet, so I sat down to the floor. It had black and white diamond shaped tiles on it.

"Where was I these last three days? You know?" she said.

I did not know, so I said, "I do not know."

Miss Lula crumpled her face up and said, "I was getting me an abortion." I am underlining it like that.

"I did not know it," I said.

"He didn't say so?" she said.

I said "Who?"

Miss Lula said, "Henry."

"No ma'am," I said.

"Sure?" she said.

"Yes ma'am," I said.

"Don't Ma'am me all the time," she said.

"Yes Miss Lula," I said.

"You all right, Willy," she said.

I said "I am?"

She said, "You are. Unless you ain't. I hope you are. I got to tell you something. I got to tell somebody, Lord knows."

"You did tell me some thing," I said.

"Something else," she said.

"You can tell Miss Askew," I said.

"She's in Cadiz or some place," Miss Lula said. "Anyway, I don't tell things to her. I want to tell you," she said. "Don't you want me to?" she said.

I said, "Is it bad?"

"It is," she said.

"If you tell me, I will not tell any one," I said.

Miss Lula looked at me with a sharp look. "That's good, because I don't want you to."

"I will not," I said.

"All right," she said. Then she looked at the ceiling. She talked to the ceiling the whole time she was telling me the story. Her voice got lower whiles she was telling it, until, towards the end of it, I could hardly hear her at all. "That Doctor Parsons down the street? Man with wire glasses?" she said.

"Tall thin man that mows his lawn?" I said.

"Him's the one," she said.

I said, "Uh huh."

"He the one who did it?" she said. She said it like that—a question.

"All right," I said.

Miss Lula said, "I was dreaming. I was in a boat somewhere. The waves made me sick. He was calling my name."

"Who was?" I said.

"He was," she said.

"Who he was again?" I said.

Doctor Parsons," she said. "Or Henry," she said. "But it was Doctor Parsons," she said. "I woke up, and it was him," she said. "I wanted to puke. My head was spinning," she said. "Guess where I was," she said.

I thought she must be in a hospital or a clinic of some sort, so I said, "Were you in a hospital or a clinic of some sort?"

"Well of course I was," she said. "But you know where I was in the hospital?"

"In a bed?" I said. "I hope you were," I said. "I hope you were not on the floor somewhere. I hope you were not in a morgue or any thing. Were you in a whirl pool bath?" I said.

"I wasn't in any of those places" she said. She waited for me to guess again, but I wanted to stop my guessing.

"I want to stop my guessing," I said.

"I was on an operating table," she said. "And a nurse was next to me in her white gown and her mask, and Doctor Parsons was behind my head where I could not see him," she said. "Guess what he wanted," she said.

I thought of a story my mother told me once. She had had an abortion her self. She was fifteen years old at the time. A woman came to her house and did it. Then my mother's mother came in to the room. My own mother was in the house. She was sleeping after she had her abortion. My mother's mother had a pan in her hands. She showed my mother what was in the pan. She said, "Nézze meg, mit tettél?" It means, See What You've Done? She said it in the Hungarian language, for this reason. She was Hungarian.

"Did he want to show you some thing?" I said.

"He wanted to tell me something," Miss Lula said.

I said, "Whiles you were on that operating table?"

"That's right," she said.

"In the middle of it?" I said.

She said, "Uh huh."

"Surely, it hurt right then," I said.

"It did, and it does," she said.

"He woke you in the middle of it?" I said.

"Yes he did," she said.

"In the middle of your operation," I said.

"That's right," she said.

"Well, what did he want?" I said.

She said "Don't you want to guess?"

"Why you want me to guess?" I said.

"Oh, I don't know," she said.

I looked at Miss Lula at that time. She had no particular look on her face. She just looked sad and dreamy. It is a look of some kind after all.

"I can not guess," I said. "I do not remember what I am supposed to guess," I said. "What am I supposed to guess?" I said.

"Don't mind it," she said.

"Why did that fellow wake you?" I said.

She said "He wanted to tell me something."

"Whut?" I said.

"That I had something wrong. That, if I had my abortion, I wouldn't have any babies any more," she said. "He said it was a healthy baby girl. I could leave it in there and it would come out fine. But if he took it out, that was the last chance for me," she said.

I said, "My my."

Miss Lula said, "But my stomach hurt so bad."

"That is terrible," I said. It is why it is a terrible story.

"I didn't know what to do," she said.

I said, "Sweet Jesus." I was not a Christian any more, but I said it any way.

"Don't you want to know what was wrong with me?" she said.

I did not want to know, really, but I said, "Was it female trouble?"

"It is a lesion of cancer on my cervix," she said.

I said, "No."

"Oh yes," she said.

"Did he get it out?" I said.

"It's a different procedure," she said. "I'll have it later on," she said.

I said "Oh," or "Uh huh," or some similar sound, or some other sort of sound.

She said, "I bet it's why I have these boils. I'm sure of it."

I said, "You are all right other wise?"

"Otherwise," she said. "Oh I's just fine. Well. I took out that baby, anyway.

Like he didn't want me to," she said.

I said, "He said, leave it in?"

"He wanted to," she said.

"What about the cancer?" I said.

"It would have been the death of me," she said.

"He told you?" I said.

She said "Nnnh," or a sound of that sort, or some other sort of sound.

"What did you tell him?" I said.

"I told him Take Out The Child," she said.

"I am glad for it," I said.

"It was a girl child," Miss Lula said. "I am calling her Mildred," she said.

I said, "It is a nice name," how ever, I do not think Mildred is a nice name. It reminds me of dread. It reminds me of the well known saying, "The mills of the gods grind exceeding slow," which was a saying of Assistant Professor Louis Morse. It is not his invention, of course. It is a saying of the well known philosopher Mister Sextus Empiricus. Mister Sextus Empiricus did not say those words of English. He said some other similar words in the Greek language, or in some similar language, but Assistant Professor Louis Morse said those English words. I do not like the saying as it is in

English. If I knew how Mister Sextus Empiricus said his saying, I would not like it his way either, I imagine. I regret it that the gods are grinding sorts of persons. The gods have no care for us mortal persons, apparently. They just grind us. I regret it. I do not want to be grinded in their mills. I do not want to be grinded in any mill. It is a cruel destiny.

My opinion is this. I do not deserve it. Miss Lula does not deserve it. The slaves between the decks did not deserve it. My brother in the pan did not deserve it. Miss Mildred Smith did not deserve it either, but she was grinded any way. I do not know if Assistant Professor Louis Morse says "The mills of the gods grind exceeding slow," any more. I do not know if he says any thing any more, but I said, "It is a nice name," never the less. This was my reason. To be polite.

Miss Lula said, "It was my mother's name." My tears flowed, then.

Chapter 12

Out, damned roaches.

The City of New York has many cock roaches. For example, they are all over Perry Street on the island of Manhattan. The cock roaches are all over the rest of Manhattan, I have heard, but I did not see those other cock roaches. I only saw the Perry Street ones. They walked on the walls and the ceiling of the kitchen in our house. If you woke up to pee in to the toilet at night, only to discover your hunger pangs were in your stomach, so you went in to the kitchen to dissolve some Hershey's Chocolate Syrup in to a glass of milk and then to quaff the milk with the dissolved syrup in it, then, you often would catch a sight of those roaches when you flipped on the light. They would scatter. First you see them, then they scatter. So, you see them. A cock roach is fast. You do not see much of it with out it has died first, or it has fallen off the ceiling. Then you probably will not see much of that cock roach any way, unless it is an exception, for this reason. It is fast. I told you. An exception is, when the cock roach falls down from the ceiling straight in to your glass of milk with the Hershey's Chocolate Syrup dissolved in it. It slows down when it is swimming. You see it, then. Some occasions are still more exceptional, so you do not see that cock roach. You drink that cock roach. Or, on an occasion which is even more exceptional than the other one, you do see the cock roach, but you only see half of the cock roach, for, you have bit it in two. Then you spit half of it out, of course. You do not spit the other half of it out. The other half of it is still in your glass of milk, and so on. Then you look at your glass of milk. There is no cock roach in there, so you are surprised, so you look up to the ceiling. You are investigating.

You are surprised, so your mouth is open. Then, bless me if an other cock roach does not fall off the ceiling straight in to your mouth. Then, it is not a merely exceptional occasion, in my opinion. It is a memorable occasion, in my opinion. I remember it. It is why I detest cock roaches.

We had cock roaches in Gum City all so. They are much more large than New York City cock roaches. They will eat you out of your house and your home if you let them, so, we do not let them. I do not like those ones any more than I do the ones on Manhattan. At Christmas vacating time, in the year 1975, my friend Assistant Professor Henry Shine, and my other friend Assistant Professor Louis Morse, and my other house mate Assistant Professor Joel Mercy left me to my own devices, which were cock roach killing devices, in our house, in Gum. Those fellows all went to New York City to visit their New York City people. I stayed back in Gum to kill the cock roaches, for two reasons. I had no money. I detest cock roaches. I will grind them in my mills gladly, if I have a cock roach grinding mill at hand, but I do not have such a mill. I do not have a mechanical device to the purpose. Rather, I have strategic devices to the purpose.

Here is your strategy to kill cock roaches in Gum City. First, you sweep up your kitchen floor and your pantry floor. Then, you sweep up all of the crumbs from your tables and your counters and your shelves. Then, you take away all the food stuffs from all the shelves in your kitchen and your pantry. You take them out of the house all together. You can sell them, or you can eat them, or you can give them away. Do not leave any of them behind in your house. Then, you sweep a broom across your kitchen floor and your pantry floor an other time. Then, you wash all of your pantry shelves and your kitchen shelves with soap and hot water. Then, you wash your kitchen floor and

your pantry floor with soap and hot water. Then, you get out. You stay out for two weeks. When you come back there, all of your cock roaches are still there, but they are dead now. They have starved to death. It is how you do it. It is how I did it.

The door bell rang when I was done doing it. Who's that, I wondered. The door bell has a chime sound. It chimed several more times. I was on my knees on the pantry floor. I was counting cock roaches. I counted twenty three. I did not count any live ones. The reason is this. Every one of them was dead. I killed every blame one of them. It is my estimate.

I still had one hundred nine more dead cock roaches to count. They were eleven cock roaches on the pantry counter, and nineteen cock roaches on the pantry shelves, and four cock roaches on the kitchen floor, and they were sixteen cock roaches on the kitchen counters, three cock roaches under the stove burner grates, and seven cock roaches on the floor of the first storey water closet, and seven cock roaches on the floor of the second storey water closet, among several other places that they were. Twenty five dead cock roaches were in the other places, of course. I did not count them at that time. I counted them at a later time. I missed a few cock roaches some place, or some other place, I imagine. I am sure I did. The reason I did not count them is, I had to get up and go to the front door, for the bell of it was ringing. I told you.

"Hello, Miss Sarah," I said. The reason is, when I opened the door, Doctor Sarah Ohm was standing on the other side of it. She was holding her green valise in her left hand. I had not seen that person since she went back to Boston, in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, where she was a teacher, after we picked out our house in September.

She said, "Where you been?"

I did not know what she meant by her question, so I said, "I do not know what you mean by your question."

She said "Let me in." Then she walked past me in to the house. She put down her valise by the umbrella stand. Then she looked at the furniture, which had sheets on it. "What's all this?" she said.

I said, "Sheets."

Miss Sarah Ohm turned around to stare me in my eyes. Then she stared me in them. She did not say any thing while she was doing it. Her eyes are pretty, black ones, but I do not like to look at them. I have said it. She spoke words to me slowly. These were the words. "I see that."

She did not say any more words. She looked like she was waiting for me to say some words my self. So, I did. I said, "How you doing, Miss Sarah?"

She shrugged her shoulders, or, she rolled them. "I gather he isn't here," she said.

"No," I said. "Who is not here?" I said. Miss Sarah Ohm waited some more, so, I said, "Henry?" for I supposed that the referent of her pronoun He from her words, I Gather He Isn't Here, was Henry.

"Henry and I are not an item anymore, haven't you heard?" Doctor Sarah Ohm said. She sat down on a sheet. That sheet was on an arm chair, so, she all so sat down on the arm chair, of course.

"Henry and Miss Lula are an item," I said.

Doctor Sarah Ohm raised her eye brows. "Well, that explains some things," she said. She shook her head. "When the cat's away," she said.

I said, "What cat?" Doctor Sarah Ohm looked at me with a speculating look I have seen before. It is a look that Assistant Professor Louis Morse looks or looked at me with at times. When I ask him, or when I asked, him, "What you speculating on, Louis?" he has never answered me, so I did not ask Doctor Sarah Ohm that question. When you ask some body a question, then that body does not answer your question, then, it hurts your feelings. That is the detail of why I did not ask her it, but she did not answer my other question, which was "What cat?" so, my feelings got hurt any way.

"Your Miss Lula has been busy," Doctor Sarah Ohm said.

I agreed with that, so I said, "I agree with that."

Miss Sarah Ohm flensed her hands. She said, "I've heard that some other people are an item these days. Have you heard anything like that?"

I thought that she might be playing a game, so I said, "Is it a game?"

"Could be," said Miss Sarah Ohm.

"What are the rules?" I said, but she did not tell me the rules.

"What are you doing here all by yourself?" she said.

"Why, I am checking up on my cock roaches," I said.

Doctor Sarah Ohm shuddered a little bit. She stood up and looked at the sheet. She had been sitting on it, of course. She slapped her blue jean pants a time or two.

"They are not on you, Miss Sarah," I said, "They are in the pantry."

She said, "I'm looking for Joel."

I said, "I am looking for cock roaches."

"Have you seen him?" she said.

"Only if he is a cock roach," I said. It was a jest, of course.

Doctor Sarah Ohm looked at me with an other kind of look. I will not try to describe it for you. Here is the reason. I can not describe it. Red Coals Under A Rock Shelf, perhaps. You shelter them from rain in rainy woods that way. No. It is too ornate.

Chapter 13

A surprise of Doctor Sarah Ohm.

The door bell rang an other time, so, I opened the front door up an other time. Then I looked out of that door an other time, but I did not see Miss Sarah Ohm standing there with her green valise an other time, of course. I saw some other persons standing there, of course. They were Assistant Professor Joel Mercy and my beloved person, Miss Lula. I knew Miss Lula for my beloved person from the day that I did not change her poultice, as I have told you. There fore, I knew that my beloved person was next to Assistant Professor Joel Mercy on the door step, when I saw Miss Lula next to that fellow. Assistant Professor Joel Mercy had a valise. His valise was not a green valise, but a black valise.

"You are back," I said.

"Indeed," Assistant Professor Joel Mercy said. He stepped past me in to the foyer of our house. It came right after the door of our house, of course. I heard him stop. I was looking at Miss Lula at the time, so I did not see him stop. Miss Lula had a queer expression upon her face. It is a reason that I was looking at her face. I might have looked at her face any way, for I enjoy looking at her face, of course. This particular time, I might have looked at her face if I did not enjoy looking at it, how ever. The expression upon her face was just that queer, at that time. She did not smile at me as she

might usually do. She did not look at me at all. She was looking over my shoulder at Assistant Professor Joel Mercy and Doctor Sarah Ohm.

"I followed you," Doctor Sarah Ohm said. I did not see her say it. I heard her say it.

"I just left," he said. I did not see him say it either, for I was still watching the face of Miss Lula. She saw him say it, how ever. She was looking at him over my shoulder. I saw her seeing him. The expression upon her face was not queer any more, or, I understood her expression the more at that time. It was an unhappy, surprised expression, so I reached a conclusion. I concluded that Miss Lula was unhappily surprised to see Doctor Sarah Ohm talking to Assistant Professor Joel Mercy at that time. "You were there," he said. "I lost my keys," he said. Then, I heard some keys, or some thing else that sounded like keys. They were hitting the floor. It was an old, brown, hard wood floor. I liked it. I do not like a hard wood floor covered up in a rug. Our floor was not covered up by one. It is why I liked it.

"Here's your fucking keys," Doctor Sarah Ohm said. I heard her say it. I did not see her say it. I still was not looking her way, which was, behind me. The sun was out, despite that it was late in December. It was bright on Miss Lula's gold hair. I was looking at it. I was looking at her hair, of course. I was not looking at the sun, of course. I have some dazzle spots of blue for floaters. They float in my eyes. They do not float in front of my eyes. They float in my eyes. They are dazzles, from when I used to look at the sun, when I was nine years old or so. I do not do it any more.

Chapter 14

The gentleman and his jealous friend.

Two people came in to my room one day. It was a day in January of the year 1976. It was the twenty eighth day of that year. It was the fourth Wednesday of that year. Those people did not come in together. They came in one at a time. One of them stepped over the door step. One of them only stepped on to the door step, then, he looked at me a while. That was Assistant Professor Joel Mercy. He was the second person who came in to my room.

An other time that Assistant Professor Joel Mercy came in to my room, was on the twenty sixth day of September at about seven thirty four post meridiem in the year 1975. The day was a Friday. I believe that Assistant Professor Joel Mercy was disposed kindly towards me, for this reason. He came in to my room to advise me. I was dressing up to go on a date. I usually did not have a date, of course. I usually stayed home on a Friday night. A Friday night was like any night, or any other night, as far as I was concerned, most of the Fridays. This particular Friday night differed from other ones I have been through, for Miss Rosalind James, who used to be a student I had, asked me to come out with her, so I was doing it. Miss Rosalind James was a lineal descendant of the well known general General Stonewall Jackson. How I know it is, she told me. "I am a lineal descendant of General Stonewall Jackson," she said. I do not recall how her family came up. This is what I recall. We were resting on the curb from our hand ball game at

the time. She was panting from the hand ball. I was panting from looking at her in her under shirt. I was her instructor in a class in the spring. It was a linear algebra class. It was not a lineal algebra class. It is a jest. Then, I played hand ball in the street with her in the summer. I do not like to play hand ball. I do not like to play ball. I do not like to play. I like to look at some one who looks like Miss Rosalind James. She played hand ball in her under shirt. She was pretty. She was pretty in her under shirt. I will not go in to it at this time. It is not my point. My point is this. She asked me to come out with her. We were playing hand ball when she asked me. It is why I mentioned hand ball. Now I am going back to Assistant Professor Joel Mercy when he was standing on my door step to advise me. I am going to quote him. There fore, I have to change paragraphs.

Here I am in an other paragraph. Assistant Professor Joel Mercy said, "Dance with her."

"Ought I to?" I said.

He said, "They like it."

I said, "I am no good at it."

"Don't matter," he said. I have noticed that Assistant Professor Joel Mercy will adopt the phrases of a putative Amazon human being from time to time. It is a time when he happens to be speaking to a genuine Amazon human being. An Amazon human being, such as my self, hears it, when a person is pretending to talk that way, but Assistant Professor Joel Mercy did not seem to know that a human being such as my self hears it, when he does it. I did not mention it to him, for this reason. I had no reason.

"All right," I said. Then, Assistant Professor Joel Mercy made some gestures. First, he grinned. Then he winked through his eye glasses. They are terribly thick, of

course. When he winked like that, his winking eye lid appeared to be a great deal more large than his other one. The eye lashes on his winking eye lid looked like bristles from a porcupine. The iris on that winking eye still looked like an eye iris, but an eye iris has an uncanny look, when it is the size of an eye glass. A flower iris is a different story, of course. It is some other story. After Assistant Professor Joel Mercy was through winking at me, he stuck his tongue at me. I thought, *Why You Doing That?* Then I thought, *It Is Rude*. I was going to resent it, but he made still an other gesture at that time, namely, he circled the thumb of his left hand and the index finger of it. Next, he poked his other index finger through his finger circle. It was his right index finger, of course. He pulled his finger in and out of his finger circle in rapid fire motions, while he put his tongue in and out of his lips in rapid fire motions. His eye lid was flapping at the same rate. It was all one gesture. It is complicated to describe it, but it is not complicated to grasp it. So, I grasped it. Assistant Professor Joel Mercy was intending to encourage me, but I was not encouraged at that time. I was discouraged at that time. Later on in the evening, when Miss Rosalind James and I laid on her bed, I was discouraged as well. It is some other story. I am not going to tell it to you.

I am going to tell you who the first person was who she came in to my room. Miss Lula. It was eight eleven post meridiem or so in the evening. She was in no thing but her white night gown. I had seen her white night gown often. She has been in that night gown when I saw it, for she often walked here and there in it, when she stayed with Assistant Professor Henry Shine in his bed room over night, prior to their disagreement. There fore, it was not my first vision of Miss Lula dressed up that way. It had some other

significance for me in latter days, how ever, after I found out that Miss Lula was my beloved person.

When I saw her standing on my door step, I said, "Hello. Why are you in your night gown?" I asked her for this reason. Who was she sleeping with?

She held her arms around her self . She shivered. "I left home my slippers," she said. "My feet's bare," she said. I looked at her feet. They were long and bony. I liked some other parts of Miss Lula better than her feet. I liked her feet, how ever. Here is my reason. They were her feet. I wished to touch them up and down, light strokes of touching. I did not do it. I did not do any thing. "Let me in?" Miss Lula said.

I said, "Surely," so she came in.

"I am going to sit on your bed," she said.

"That is all right," I said.

She sat on my bed, shivering that way. "Shut the door," she said, so I stood up from my chair, which it was near my desk, the very which, I was sitting at it at that time. The desk was a large, brown, wood desk. May be that it was mahogany.

Assistant Professor Louis Morse said it to me. He sat on it when he first saw it. Then, he lay down on it in a prone position. Then, he made a swimming motion, such as a turtle might make, if the turtle was about as large as Assistant Professor Louis Morse. Then he said, "Where'd you get this? It's mahogany." He liked that desk. He asked me to sell it, but I did not sell it. My reason was this. I liked that desk.

"You cold," I said. I was speaking to Miss Lula, of course. I was not speaking to Assistant Professor Louis Morse, of course. You are not cold when you are swimming on my desk in your three pieced suit, of course. You are cold when you are shivering on

my bed in your white night gown and your long, bony, bare feet, of course. It is obvious. After I stood up, I shut the door. Then, I went to my closet. I had my bath robe in my closet. I offered my bath robe to Miss Lula.

She wrapped her self in my bath robe. "Why you so good to me?" she said.

I said, "Oh, I don't know." It was one of my lies. I did not want to tell her why I was good, so I told one.

Miss Lula put her hands on her face. Her hands and her feet were similar. If you see both of them at once, then you notice it. They are both long and bony. Long, bony hands might seem elegant to you or to me, but long, bony feet do not seem that way to me. I do not know how they may seem to you, for this reason. I do not know any thing about you. How feet seem to you is some thing about you, so, I do not know it. I did not want to caress Miss Lula's hands, as elegant as they seemed to me. I only wanted to caress her feet. I have heard of the foot fetish. My feeling was not a fetish feeling. It was an other sort of feeling. It was this. Worship.

Theoretically, it is a fetish any way. Mister Louis Morse said so, in Perry Street, on the island of Manhattan. "It must be a foot long," he said. His eyes were rolling with delight. "I worship it," he said. Then, he frowned. Then he said, "Theoretically, it's a fetish." It was some other conversation we were having on some other bodily organ of some other person, who, he was not Miss Lula. We did not know Miss Lula at that time. It was an organ of some other person. I am going back to Gum now.

Here I am in Gum again. Miss Lula peeked between two of her fingers. "What do you do here all by your self?" she said.

I rolled my shoulders. Then I said, "You know."

"Why you by your self all the time?" she said.

I rolled my shoulders an other time.

"I ought fix you up," she said.

I said, "You ought not."

"I know just mobs of girls," she said.

"I know you do," I said.

"They ain't all drug fiends either," she said.

I said, "Uh huh."

"Friends I have," Miss Lula said. "Perfectly nice people," she said.

" 'course they are," I said.

"Pure enough for the pure of heart," she said. "Some of them, anyway," she said.

"I ain't pure," I said.

"No, but you think you are," she said.

"I do not," I said.

"Now you lying," she said.

"Why say that?" I said.

"Because it's the truth," she said. "Tell me a sin of your'n," she said.

I thought about it. "I do not want to," I said.

She shuddered. Then she said, "I guess you don't."

"Miss Lula," I said.

"Mister Willy," she said back to me.

"What is the matter?" I said.

Miss Lula covered up her eyes. Here is the way she did it. She did it this way. She moved one of her fingers.

"I like to stay in here a while," she said.

I said, "All right." Then, she laughed. Then, she coughed. Miss Lula often coughed after she laughed. She had the smoker's cough. Her brand of cigarettes was Camel's Cigarettes. They have a camel on the package. They have a pyramid on the package. They have a palm tree on the package. Palm trees are all over the land of Amazon. Lizards climb up and down the trunks of them. Those lizards are chartreuse. It is a color like green or yellow. Those lizards have fans on their heads. They are small and quick and they look fierce. The lizards are small and quick and look fierce. The fans are small, but the fans are not quick, of course. The fans do not look fierce. They make the lizards they are on look fierce. They are called Amazon Devils. The lizards are called Amazon Devils. The fans on the lizards are not called Amazon Devils. They are called fans.

"Not all night," Miss Lula said. I am under lining it.

I said, "Why you covering your eyes?" She would not answer me. She only shook her head once. "Never mind it," I said. I sat next to her a while. Her breathing moved her butt up and down. I soon noticed it. Then, her butt moved my mattress on my bed up and down. Then, my mattress moved my own butt up and down, so, here is what I thought about it. Her Butt Is Moving My Butt. I own, it is a queer thought. It excited me a great deal. My heart was thumping.

An other item I noticed about Miss Lula's breathing was this. It was weeping breathing. It is how a body breathes when it is weeping. Miss Lula was weeping, but I

did not hear her weeping. She was not audible. She was pitiful. So, I pitied her. She sighed after a while. It was a long, tremulous heave in. Then, it was an other long, tremulous heave, in the other direction. It was the out direction, of course. Then, she giggled. She said some thing. I did not make it out.

I said, "What did you say?"

She said, "I said it was horrible." Then, she giggled an other time.

I said, "Whut was?"

Miss Lula shook her head and laughed in her rueing tone of voice. It is a low tone of voice. When she talks in it, or she laughs in it, then she is rue full. You know it when you hear it.

"I won't do it again," she said.

"Do whut?" I said.

She said, "Beg."

I said, "Huh."

"I never felt so ridiculous in all my life," she said.

"That is a pity," I said.

Miss Lula revealed one of her eyes. She did it this way. She moved back her right hand ring finger. It was a ring finger, but there was no ring on it. There was no ring on any of Miss Lula's fingers. She had a thin golden necklace around her neck, how ever. It had a thin golden cross hanging on it. When she breathed, her cross moved. It looked like it was waving at me. "You a strange fellow," Miss Lula said to me. Of course she said it to me. She could not say it to any body else. No body else was in there. "No offense," she said.

"None taken," I said. It was an other lie.

"I hope not," she said. She was still peeping at me with her one eye. "You ain't no stranger than I am," she said.

I said, "You ain't strange, Miss Lula." I said, "You great."

Miss Lula said, "Hah." She did not laugh, Hah. She said that word, Hah. Then she said, "Where did you get such an idea? Don't tell me. Don't tell me." She was shaking her head. Her eye was back under neath her finger.

"All right. I will not," I said.

"Don't," she said. Then she said, "Here's what a great person I am, Willy. Here's what a great person I am," but she did not say any thing after she said that. I did not say any thing either. I watched her cross. It was still waving at me. After a while, Miss Lula said, "Do you know where I was just now?"

I said "No, ma'am."

Miss Lula said "God, Willy, don't Ma'am me that way."

"All right," I said.

"You too damn agreeable," she said.

So I said, "No I ain't." It was a jest.

"Don't you hate anybody?" she said.

I said "Umm. Umm," then I rolled my shoulders. "If a person hates me," I said.

"Does anybody hate you, then," she said.

I said, "I guess so."

She said, "Who?"

I did not know who, so I said, "I do not know. Some student, maybe?"

"I doubt it," she said.

"I do not know," I said. We did not say any thing else for a while. She was breathing. Her cross was waving. Her eyes were behind her fingers. My male parts were having their reflex.

Then Miss Lula Smith said, "I will tell you where I was just now."

I said, "All right."

"You won't tell any body," she said. She whispered it.

I said, "I will not."

"Swear," she said.

"What on?" I said.

"I don't know," she said. She was still whispering. "Your mother's grave," she said.

"She is alive," I said. "My brother's," I said.

Miss Lula moved back her finger. I saw her eye brows go up. Rather, I saw her fore head wrinkle up. I could see her fore head. I could not see her eye brows. "Your brother's?" she said.

"Whut happens if you lie, then?" I said.

"Whut do you mean?" Miss Lula said.

"Whut happens to your brother's grave?" I said.

"I don't know," she said. "Maybe that he gets out of it and walks around," she said.

I said, "He will not do that."

"No?" she said.

"No," I said.

"Why not?" she said.

I said "Why that he is dead, of course. What could be more obvious?" What Could Be More Obvious? was a phrase that Assistant Professor Henry Shine often said to me or to Assistant Professor Louis Morse, while in the throes of their metaphysical discourse.

Miss Lula put her hands down. She was looking at me with both of her eyes. It was a sharp look. She said, "I ain't joking, Willy." I was abashed at that time.

"I will not tell any body any thing," I said.

"Promise me," she said.

"I promise," I said but I was not thinking about my promise. I was imagining some thing. If it was some thing I had ever seen, then I would not have imagined it. I would have remembered it. But it was some thing I had never seen at that time, so I imagined it. It had to do with Miss Lula's body. So, I am not going to say. This is what I am not going to say. What I imagined at that time.

Miss Lula did not cover up her eyes, but she looked away from me. Her eyes aimed at a corner of the ceiling behind my head to the left side of me. She kept both her eyes aimed at that corner most of the time while she whispered me the rest of it. She said, "A certain lady thought that she was in love with a certain gentleman. The gentleman was tall and handsome and he had a jealous friend." She took her eyes away from the ceiling and settled them on me. "Not you," she said.

"I am not jealous," I said.

"I know it," she said. She took her eyes away to the ceiling. She said, "The lady fell out with the handsome tall gentleman, and the jealous man made to solicit her affections. He plied her with gifts, and flattery, and all of the other things he could think of. The lady forgot her sadness and went with the jealous friend. But jealousy is all over, you know. The jealous friend had a love of his own. The love of the jealous friend came here and flew at them—the lady, and the jealous friend, too. The jealous friend must choose between them, his love told the jealous friend. Well, the jealous friend did not love the lady. He was only jealous of the handsome tall gentleman, and he had had his little victory by now. So, he went back to his love."

I said, "Huh."

"The lady was struck with a terrible regret, but she didn't know something." Miss Lula looked at me.

I said, "Whut?"

"Whut did the lady regret?" Miss Lula said. "Her betrayal by that jealous friend? Or her betrayal of the handsome tall gentleman?" she said.

"You did not betray him," I said.

She looked at the ceiling. "I don't know," she whispered.

"Well I do," I said.

"So one day the lady went to his room," she said. "She took all of her clothes off and lay on his bed. It was late in the afternoon. She waited hours. It got dark, and he hadn't come. Finally, he did come in, and he looked at her lying there, nude and naked, and he said, 'I'm sorry.' And then he shut the door again."

Did the jealous friend say it, or did the tall, handsome gentleman say it? I wanted to ask her. I did not ask, how ever.

Chapter 15

The spirit of Miss Lula.

A spirit is a breath, so the sound that I heard was the spirit of Miss Lula. Her spirit was all over the house. I was sitting on my bed, where Miss Lula and I had sat an hour or so before. More or less, we had sat there one hour and fifty four minutes before that time. When Miss Lula got up from my bed, I kept on sitting on my bed. When she took my bath robe off, and she leaned over me, then I kept on with my sitting. When her face got so close to me that I felt her breath, which was her warm tobacco breath, on my fore head, then, I still kept on with my sitting. When her lips, which were warm, too, touched on my fore head, then I all most did not keep on with my sitting. I all most stood up and wrapped my arms about her, and kissed her back, but I did not. I only kept on with my sitting. I did not all most kiss the back of her. I all most kissed her back. It is only a phrase, of course. It is not her back, of course.

"I going to see Louis," she said. Then she left my room. Then I heard them talking. The bed room of my friend Assistant Professor Louis Morse and my own bed room are located over the same spot. Mine is on the second floor, at the head of the stairs to paradise. His is on the first floor, at the foot of the stairs to paradise. My bed room is higher off the ground than his bed room is, but those two bed rooms are over the same piece of ground. That piece of ground is under the floor of Assistant Professor Louis Morse's bed room, of course. He was in his bed room with my beloved person, Miss Lula. My bed room door was open, but his bed room door was closed. How I could

tell was, their two voices were behind the door. I heard those voices, but I did not hear any words. Generally, I could hear words all through the first floor, when I was on the second floor. For example, a dish breaks. I might be in my bed room writing a scholarly paper with my black ink pen, or I might be writing a comment on an essay some student of mine had written. I would not use my black ink pen then. I would use my red ink pen then. I might be writing with one of my pens, or I might be writing with the other of my pens. Then, let's suppose the dish breaks in the kitchen. A dish will do it now and then. It is a misleading voice.

"It's a misleading voice, Willy." Assistant Professor Louis Morse told me it one time. "A dish doesn't break, after all. A dish is broken. Don't you agree?" It is what he told me. It is consonant with my example. It is right in the middle of my example, in a matter of fact. For, after the dish breaks, Assistant Professor Louis Morse says some thing, and I hear every word of it. He is in the kitchen, standing at the sink. I am in my bed room, sitting at my mahogany desk. He is wearing his dish washing apron. I am wearing my own clothing. Then, I hear every word. The words have to go out of the kitchen and in to the foyer. Then, they have to go up the stairs to paradise, and turn the corner in to the second floor corridor. After they get there, then they have to go up to my bed room door. Then, they have to come in to my bed room and hop in to my ears. Never the less, I hear all of them. Here is what they are. "How did you do that, Willy?" It is a jest of Assistant Professor Louis Morse, of course, which, he offered that jest often.

Most of the time, Assistant Professor Louis Morse and Assistant Professor Henry Shine cooked up the dishes. Then we ate up the dishes. Then I washed up the dishes,

whiles the rest of them smoked their cigars and their cigarettes and conversed together. Of course, if Master Joshua Oleander was along with Miss Lula, he did not smoke a cigarette or a cigar, but he did take part in their conversations. His part in the conversations was difficult for the others of us to understand, for this reason. He did not speak any English at the time. He only made sounds of various sorts. I often broke a dish when I washed the dishes. Then, Assistant Professor Louis Morse would get up from the dinner table and come in to the kitchen. He would put down his cigar on a counter, or on some other counter. He and Assistant Professor Henry Shine had several counters in their for their different purposes, such as, one to cut meat. One to cut vegetables. One to tap out flour on for baking, and so on, and so forth. Assistant Professor Louis Morse put his cigar on one of them. I made my mental note then. If he put his cigar on the cutting vegetables counter, then I did not eat any vegetables the next day, and so on. After he put his cigar down, then Assistant Professor Louis Morse would press down on the thumb lever of his coin change device. It was strapped on the belt of his pants, of course. His coin change device would make an audible sound at that time, which was my signal. The meaning of the signal was, Give Me Several Coins For My Coin Change Device. Then Assistant Professor Louis Morse would say, "A dollar and a half," or "Two bucks," or some other such amount of money. Then I would give him the coins, or I would tell him that I did not have the coins. Then he might tell me to write him an I Owe You, or he might say "You fucking piker," and so on. I have gone off of my point. I am back on my point now. This is my point. I often broke one or more dishes. On an occasion when Assistant Professor Louis Morse washed the dishes, he broke one once in a while as well. Then he would call out to me. I might be in the parlor, conversing, or up in my bed

room, writing with my black ink pen, or my red ink pen. Assistant Professor Louis Morse all ways asked me this question on those occasions. "Willy, how did you do that?" It was his jest. I all ways heard all the words.

But I did not hear any of the words that were going between Miss Lula and Assistant Professor Louis Morse when they were talking in his bed room after she and I were done talking in my bed room. There fore, the words were obstructed. It was my conclusion. The words could not get out of my friend Assistant Professor Louis Morse's bed room. I inferred it. I inferred that his bed room door was shut. It is how I knew it was shut.

I did not hear the words they were saying, but I heard their voices carrying the words. Assistant Professor Louis Morse's voice was deep. It wove in and out of Miss Lula's voice, which all so was deep, but when it was weaving in and out of Assistant Professor Louis Morse's voice, then it did not sound deep, of course. It was not as deep as his voice was, of course. It was deep in a woman's voice way, which is lighter and sweeter than the way a man's voice is deep, of course. It sounded light and sweet and tremulous and sad. Assistant Professor Louis Morse's voice sounded like he was blinking. I can not tell you how that sounds, but it is a quality of his voice when you have upset him, which, he does not wish to let you in on it. Then, he blinks a great deal. His voice has its blinking quality at those times. I can not describe it to you. The reason is this. I do not know how to describe it.

Then it was that the spirit of Miss Lula, which, it was her breath, began to fill up the house. She was breathing remarkably loudly, as it seemed to me. Slow and loud. Slow and loud. Slow and loud. Some thing in it began to electrocute me. I do not mean

Electrify. I mean Electrocute, as I have said it, for it was killing my soul. Her spirit was inhaling. Then, it was exhaling. Then, it was inhaling. Then, it was exhaling, and so on, and so forth, and so on, and so forth, on, and on, and on. Her sounds were a fatal current moving through me. It filled up all of the rooms. The walls of the rooms bowed. They bowed in. Then, they bowed out again, and so on, and so on, and so on. A light came through the windows, though it was night outside. Those windows were bending in some magical forces of her breathing. They glowed a pale white with her force of magic.

A picture came in to my mind. Assistant Professor Louis Morse on top Miss Lula. All I can see is Brillo™ horns of hair sticking out on the two sides of his head, over his ears, and a pale shine on his back, and some wisps of hair on his shoulders. I have seen Assistant Professor Louis Morse's shoulders. They have some wisps of hair on them. He has no shirt on his back, in my particular picture, of course. He is naked, of course. Miss Lula is naked in my picture as well, but her nakedness is covered. Assistant Professor Louis Morse is covering it, in my picture. This is what he is covering her nakedness with, in my picture. His particular nakedness. In my picture, what I see of Miss Lula is this. Blond snakes on a pillow. They are not genuine snakes. They are snakes of her gold hair. They coil and hiss on Assistant Professor Louis Morse's pillow. It is a pink pillow, and it has blue embroidery on it. I have seen his pink pillow, for I washed all the pillow cases every week. I washed the sheets and some other items as well. Washing items was my lot in our house, so I washed them. I did not wash any body's under wear, however, except that I washed my own particular under wear, of course. Who else was going to wash it. I see Miss Lula's red lips. They are starting out of her face, which is a mask face from a carnival. It has her eyes painted wide open blue

on it. I see the bottoms of her feet. They are on either side of the nakedness of Assistant Professor Louis Morse. He is not doing much of any thing, in my picture. He is just a slick wet pale hull of him self, whiles Miss Lula is all wild golds and reds and breathings along the edges of his hull. She is the one who is doing.

I felt that I was dying in that sound of Miss Lula's breathing spirit. I curled up and held on to my ears. I bent over and pressed my hands on my ears, but I could not keep her sounds out of me. It was my jealous passion, I imagine. I never had been put through a jealous passion prior to that time. I have been put through it after that time, but that particular time was the worst time. Some other sounds came in to my ears. They were sounds from my self. They were groaning sounds. I said, "Oh God," but I did not believe in God. I said Oh God any way. It was Pascal's wager, perhaps. Then I split in two parts. One of my parts was curling up and groaning. My other part was floating off in a corner of the ceiling some where. He was looking down at the groaning part, thinking, "Ain't no God – be quiet about it. You faking any way." Some other part than those two parts came in to it at that time. He was part number three, and he said, "What you say that fellow is faking on?"

After my parts had been discussing the matter back and forth some while, I noticed that Assistant Professor Joel Mercy was standing on my door step. He did not seem to be preparing any speech. He just observed my jealous passion. His moustache drooped. His eye glasses magnified his eye bags. They magnified his eye lids as well. Those lids had red edges, and they had his usual porcupine quills for eye lashes. He did not say any thing. I did not say any thing, like wise. I only looked back at him, whiles Miss Lula haunted the house with her breathing. I took my hands off my ears, but

Assistant Professor Joel Mercy did not say any thing to me. Miss Lula's spirit, it was too loud for us.

Chapter 16

Pass Over.

My mother is a Jewish mother. I have told you. There fore, I am Jewish, of course. I do not mind that I am Jewish on most occasions. I mind it on some occasions. When you are walking one way down the street, and you meet me whiles I am walking up the street the other particular way, then, you put out your arm straight, then, you keep on walking whiles your arm has a collision with my shoulder, then, I twirl one or two times and fall over, then, you say, "Jew" – then, I mind it. You are some sort of crossed eyes goiter throat hair sprouts in your nose sort of fellow. You do not regularly bathe or wash your teeth, and you walk in your bare feet on the side walk and your feet have a foul odor to them, in my experience, if you greet me in that manner. We have some fellows like you in the land of Amazon, unfortunately. I prefer that I was not Jewish, when I run in to a fellow like you. When I run in to the other fellows, or other persons who are not your sort, then I do not mind it. I only mind one item about it. I do not blend in to the land of Amazon. I prefer to blend in. I prefer to sit, or stand, or walk along, or other wise exist, with out I am singled out at times. I prefer to ghost along the road with out I am noticed. It is the safe way, of course. How ever, at times, I am singled out, whether I like it or do not, unfortunately.

The preacher at our Pass Over for Christians supper at Amazon State College singled me out, unfortunately. I did not single my self out there, which was Reverend Guffey Hall. You have not heard of Reverend Guffey with out you have listened to the radio after mid night in the land of Amazon, or you have heard about him and his

preachings, or you have read about him and his preachings. Reverend Guffey preaches against the godless people, such as Hindoo people, or Mohammedan people, or Communist people, or Jewish people. It is one reason that I did not single my self out in Reverend Guffey Hall. I did not say I am Jewish to any one. I did not say any thing to any one. I only bowed my head like every body else whiles the preacher singled me out. I did not know that he knew me at all. I know that I did not know him at all. I did not know his name at that time. I do not know his name at this time. I did not know he was going to do it, else, I would not have agreed to squire Miss Isabel to that particular occasion. That reverend preacher stood at a microphone on a microphone pole in the front of the room, whiles we bowed our heads for the blessing. He said, "Lord, thank you for this wonderful meal, the bounty of your fruitful land. Make us grateful. Make us faithful and good, and make us all brothers and sisters in the light of Jesus Christ your Son. This ain't no Hebrew Passover dinner we serving in Your house, Lord. This is a Christian Passover, Lord. We are remembering the time when your Son called His people to remember His sacrifice. We ask you to forgive your misfortunate chosen for they stiff necks and ingratitude, Lord. They do not remember it. They do not own Your Son as their King. They worship the calf of gold, so forgive them, Lord. This ain't no Hebrew worship we have going on here. Any old Hebrew who came here under the aforesaid impression, he ought get up and leave right now." Then I sneaked open my left eye lid to see if that reverend was looking at me. He was looking at me with both of his eyes. It is how he singled me out. My appetite got lost then.

I said, "That fellow knows me."

Miss Isabel was bowing her head on the right side of me. She said, "Shish." She was a woman of great attractions and no great height. Her skin was fair, if pocked some what. It set off strongly her hair, which, it came parted down the center of her skull in violent waves of black and glossy curls. Her nose was snubbed and pretty. Her lips were dark and pretty. Her eyes, same. Her eye's lashes, more so. Her teeth were white and sparkled, with this peculiar feature. Little fangs.

"How does he know who I am, I wonder," I said.

Miss Dee Light Brown was sitting next to Miss Isabel on the other side of her. She began to fret, so her mother knocked her one. Then she said "Shish." Miss Dee Light Brown did not say "Shish." Her mother said "Shish." It was only a soft little knock that her mother gave Miss Dee Light Brown, but Miss Dee Light Brown began to bawl immediately at that time. So, we left. It was convenient for me.

Chapter 17

Butter flies come on me.

Here is why I got with Miss Isabel. My beloved person, Miss Lula, wanted to go lie out on the sand at the Boney Banks at two weekends before the Easter vacating time. The Boney Banks are some long islands off the coast of the land of Amazon, of course. They are haunted. "They haunted, Willy." It is what Miss Lula told me at that time. I knew it all ready, how ever. You know it from you are a child, when you a child in the land of Amazon. Every body tells you, so you know it. They tell you how Yellow Tom, who, he was the captain of the pirate sloop Jack of four guns, buried a box of Spanish coins near Tooth Rock. It is on the strand of the harbor that way. The reason that Yellow Tom is called Yellow Tom is some reason I do not know. Tooth Rock is called Tooth Rock for this reason. It will bite. His cook, Mister Allen Lee, shot Yellow Tom in the back of his head. His spade was still in his hand at that time. Mister Allen Lee is the well known person Six Bits Lee of song and story. Here is why Mister Allen Lee is called Six Bits Lee. After he had the back of his head shot off, Yellow Tom turned about to see who had done him. "Why Allen," he said. Then, he fell to his knees. "I will see you again," he said. Then he laid down in the sand. Then he died, of course. You will all most all ways do that way in those circumstances, or in similar circumstances, of course. Three days later, after three nights of dreams, Mister Allen Lee hung him self in the galley of the Jack. She was on a course for Port au Prince under his own command at that time. The story goes this way. When his slave cut him down, six gold pistoles fell out of Mister Allen Lee's mouth. It is why he is called Six Bits Lee.

"We ought go sunbathing and skinny dipping," Miss Lula said. "Raise up Six Bits and ask him where his treasure is," she said.

"Ain't his," I said.

"He paid for it," she said.

"Well, I do not want to pay for it," I said. I had an other objection, which I did not wish to tell to her. I did not want to skinny dip with Miss Lula. I wanted to do it, of course, but I did not want to do it either. I was thinking of her various parts bathing in that sun light. That was all right. Then I was thinking, I would certainly have a reflex at that time, but Miss Lula only wanted to be my friend. What was I going to do about a reflex at that time. No thing. A reflex, which a fellow does not do any thing about it, it is distracting, of course. All so, it is an embarrassing scenario. It is even a humiliating scenario. So it was not all right. "I do not think I want to go," I said.

"Do you or don't you," she said.

We were in the cafeteria in the basement of Gorgon Hall at that time. Feminists ate there. I saw one of those feminists one booth over from us. She was a Chinese woman with long hair and wide brown sun glasses. It was a dark cafeteria, but she had her brown sun glasses on her eyes. I did not know her name, but I knew that she was a scholar of elliptic curves like me. How I knew it, is, I had an elliptic curve class with her, for I was taking some classes, as well as that I was giving some classes, at that time. My class mate who was a feminist had long, red finger nails. They were four or five inches long. I did not like her finger nails. I disliked her finger nails. I felt that they were for fellows like my self to fear. So, I feared them. Miss Lula was a feminist, but her finger nails were not long and red. They were shorter and red. I did not fear her particular

finger nails. She had brown sun glasses on her head as well, but they were not across her eyes. They were on top of her bangs. Miss Lula had lovely golden bangs at that time. As far as I can tell from the pictures in the news papers, she has them still.

At that exact time, an other well known campus feminist came in to the cafeteria. That was Miss Isabel. She was not a student of Amazon State College. She was an outside agitator. She lived in Crow Hollow with her daughter. I told you on page one hundred or so. She only came by to agitate, or to sit with Miss Lula in Gorgon Hall to plot and plan their agitations, or to do business with her. Miss Isabel and Miss Lula had a business. It was not a legal business. It was an illegal business. It was unwise.

Assistant Professor Louis Morse advised them one time. We were all sitting in the same booth where we were sitting again this time. "It's unwise," he said. "Crime and politics don't mix," he said.

"You joking," Miss Lula said.

"I assure you I am not," he said.

"Crime and politics, they the same damn thing," Miss Lula said.

"Certainly," Assistant Professor Louis Morse said. "But we must segregate the discourses," he said.

"Come again," Miss Lula said.

"You haven't been to New Jersey, my dear," he said.

Miss Isabel leaned over. Miss Lula was between her and Assistant Professor Louis Morse at that time. "I been to Jersey," Miss Isabel said. "I'm from Jersey. I was born in fucking Jersey," she said.

"What you mean, Louis, 'segregate'?" Miss Lula said.

"I, too, was born in fucking Jersey," Assistant Professor Louis Morse said. "My family is not utterly obscure there," he said. "Do you know the name Itsy Moscovitz?"

"What if?" Miss Isabel said.

"He had most of the west Jersey numbers territory," Assistant Professor Louis Morse said. "And two delicatessens," he said.

"So?" Miss Isabel said.

"Before your day, no doubt," Assistant Professor Louis Morse said.

"I remember that dude," she said. "He was on TV," she said. "You don't look like him," she said.

Assistant Professor Louis Morse straightened. He tugged on the vest of his suit. "On the contrary. My mother informs me that Uncle Itsy, as a small boy, and I, as a small boy, were indistinguishable."

"He was big. You're totally tiny," Miss Isabel said.

"Wait until I grow all the way up," Assistant Professor Louis Morse said.

"Why did your uncle go on television?" Miss Lula said.

"He was chairman of Garden State Merchants Against Legalized Gambling," Assistant Professor Louis Morse said.

"We won't get in his kind of trouble," Miss Isabel said.

"What kind?" Miss Lula said.

"He got blown up," Miss Isabel said.

"No," Miss Lula said.

"In his wine cellar," Assistant Professor Louis Morse said. "A shame. The collection was excellent," he said.

"Gawd," Miss Lula said.

Assistant Professor Louis Morse said, "The all seeing Asshole is all ways the first suspect. He probably was playing with his yo-yo, or doing something equally useful, when the real culprit executed his plot. As I see it—this was the consensus at the time—'twas Noisy Bitsy blew up noisy Itsy," he said.

"Get out," Miss Isabel said.

"Who that?" Miss Lula said.

"Big Bitsy. Capo de tutti capo," Assistant Professor Louis Morse said. "Short person—shorter than, mmm, I myself am. He maintained a pretence that he was mute. A person who was shy of publicity," he said. "He seems to have, umm, discharged Itsy. My grandmother receives a garland of black orchids every year on the anniversary," he said. "My grandmother adores orchids," he said.

Miss Lula said, "My capo don't shoo flies."

"Harry? Harry's a lickspittle. A blackguard. A moneygrubbing scapegrace. He's not a capo, but a lackey," Assistant Professor Louis Morse said.

"Closest I got to one," Miss Lula said.

"Until something, mmm, blows up here on the campus," Assistant Professor Louis Morse said. "Then we'll receive out of town visitors. It will be your lovely heads on platters, my dear Salomes," he said.

"You the one desegregating the discourses, Louis," Miss Lula said, and so forth, and so forth. I am done reminiscing about that conversation. It is a perfectly past tense conversation. I am going back to the other conversation. It is an imperfectly past tense conversation.

Miss Isabel sat next to Miss Lula in our particular booth. She put her arm, which wrist at the end of her arm was bejangled in tin bracelets, or steel bracelets, or bracelets of more precious metals, all so, the fingers at the end of her arm were bejangled in paste gems, or, more precious gems, around her shoulder. She did not put her arm around her own shoulder. She put her arm around Miss Lula's shoulder. You can put your arm around your own shoulder, if your plan is to scratch your other shoulder, for an example, but she did not do it. Miss Isabel looked at me. Here is some more of her appearance. Her face skin was the sweet cream color, but it had acne holes in it. They were not the red ones, or the red and white pus ones, or the black head ones. They were just empty old little holes. Her eyes, which had brown irises, were circled with blue make up on her eye lids. All so, they were circled with black coal, or kohl, or mascara, perhaps. She had a leather jacket and a pink tank top. I like tank tops for the following reasons. Nipples. Arm pits. Miss Isabel's hair, which as you know was curly black hair, was tied with bows of white cloth, one in each of her many curls. I thought, "You awe full pretty," but I did not say, "You awe full pretty." I did not say any thing.

Miss Isabel said, "What are you staring at?"

I looked away from her. I looked at the plastic letters over the grill across the way. They said "French Fries \$1.00 Tax \$.03. Cole Slaw \$.75 Tax \$.02".

"Look at him blush," Miss Isabel said.

Miss Lula said, "He shy."

Miss Isabel said, "He's looking at my titties."

"I ain't," I said.

"Smoke on your ass," she said.

I said "Whut." I twisted around to look for the smoke.

"Pants on fire," Miss Isabel said.

"He ogled wimmins from way back," Miss Lula said. "But he shy about it," she said.

"I ain't," I said.

"I guess you ain't," she said.

"Ain't ogled wimmins," I said.

"Look at him," Miss Isabel said.

Miss Lula said, "You turn more scarlet, my dear, and you will perspire your own blood." I touched my cheek. I was thinking several evil thoughts on women at that time. I will keep them to my self. Miss Lula reached over the table. It was a Formica™ table with cake crumbs on it. She touched my hand. That hand was the one that was touching my cheek. Some electric charge, or some other charge, coursed up from my hand, up my arm, across my chest, in to my heart. Miss Lula used her low voice on me. "It's all right," she said. I was feeling sulky. I sulked, there fore. I looked at the crumbs. They were yellow crumbs with a brown shade on top. "I'm too pale," Miss Lula said. "We're going to lay out on the Boney Banks. You want to come with?" she said.

"How come he got to come?" Miss Isabel said.

Miss Lula said, "He got to practice his driving."

Miss Isabel rubadubbed her bosoms in a round, slow motion. "He better keep his eyes on the road," she said.

"I am not going," I said.

"Yes you are," Miss Lula said. She nodded. She was agreeing with her self, I imagine. It was how it was arranged. She arranged it. The following afternoon, which was a Friday one, I practiced my driving skills. I practiced them in Miss Lula's automobile, which, it was in fact Assistant Professor Louis Morse's automobile. Here is who were in Miss Lula's automobile with me at that time. Miss Lula. Master Joshua Oleander. Miss Isabel. Miss Dee Light Brown.

Miss Dee Light Brown was eight years old. Miss Lula's automobile had four seats, but five people were in it. Master Joshua Oleander sat on the lap of Miss Lula. They were in the seat next to the driver's seat. I was in that particular seat. You might suppose that Miss Dee Light Brown sat in the rear, behind the driver's seat, while Miss Isabel sat in the rear, behind the other seat, which Miss Lula was in, with her son in her lap. You might suppose, other wise, that Miss Dee Light Brown, with Miss Isabel, were sitting in the rear, but in an opposite configuration. Those suppositions are not all together correct. They sat in one of those two configurations for ten minutes or so. I do not recall which one they sat in, but, after the ten minutes, Miss Dee Light Brown noticed that Master Joshua Oleander had his mother's arms around him self, so, she wanted her own mother's arms around her self as well, so, she insisted. Some weeping and other sounds ensued. Then, her mother knocked her once. She did not knock her hard, I believe, but Miss Dee Light Brown chose to resent the matter, so some what louder weeping, as well as other sounds, ensued at that time. Then Miss Isabel issued some oaths and took her daughter on to her own lap. After some while, Miss Dee Light Brown's sounds tailed off. The wind on my ears, as well as Miss Lula's scarf, which, it was a nylon tan scarf, whipping in that wind, were the only sounds left. Miss Lula had

her sun glasses on her eyes. I had to keep my own eyes on the road. They were not on the road, of course. It is a manner of speaking, of course, but I had to concentrate that way. Driving her particular car was not natural for me. Driving a general car was not natural for me. I had to pay my attention to it, but, once in a while, I paid some of my attention to the looks of Miss Lula in stead. Her looks were glorious, in my particular eyes. Her lips had red lip stick on them. Her hair was flying in that driving wind. It was brilliant hair. She kept her head back to catch the sun light. Her teeth were white in between her red lips, as though she was grinning. She looked that way for the following reason. She was grinning.

We drove east for about four hours and eleven minutes, then we pulled in to the lot of a motel on the crest of a hill. A cause way was down the other side of the hill. Boney Bay was under the cause way. Skiffs, canoes, and other small craft were down there. "Tooth Rock," Miss Lula said. "See it," she said. So, I looked for it. So, I saw it. It was on the island on the other side of the cause way, near the sand. It is no thing but a rock, how ever. It looks like a tooth, if a tooth is twenty five feet tall. It looks like a twenty five foot shark's tooth, perhaps. The sun was going down behind us, which was west of us, of course. It cast sun light on toothy wave tops sprouting in the green sea, 't other side of the Tooth Rock. Then those wave tops glistered and gleamed, of course. A salt odor, or a fish odor, or both of those odors, or some other odors, came up on the breeze. Some gulls hovered out there. I heard their call of Scree, or Scry, or some similar other call. The wave tops sparkled. Then they sank back in to the sea. Then they sprouted up again, or some other wave tops sprouted up again. Then those wave tops glistered a moment or two. Then they sank down with the other ones. I made some

philosophical reflections upon the sea at that time, but I will not tell you about them.

Here is my reason. I do not recall my philosophical reflections.

We rented a bungalow in the motel grounds. That bungalow had two beds in it. Miss Lula had one with Master Joshua Oleander. The two Miss Browns had the other one. I had a sleeping bag. I did not mind it. I kept my eyes open under my eye lids after it was dark. Light from the moon came in through a gap in the curtains. That moon light lit Miss Lula's face. Sun light made the hair of Miss Lula gleam like ancient gold, but moon light made it as dark as a shadow. Her lips were dark that way, too, in the moon's light. It is interesting. So, I was interested. I watched Miss Lula's face in the moon's light for a few hours. Then I slept for a few hours. I do not know how many hours I did those actions apiece, for I could not see my watch at that time. Whiles I slept, I dreamed. I remember my dream, but I am not going to tell you it. It is personal.

In the morning, we walked across the cause way to Boney Banks. We spread out some blankets on the sand. Tooth Rock was to one side of us. The blue water was in front of us. It is blue in the morning. Orange butter flies were hang gliding over us. Blue butter flies were hang gliding too. They smelled honey. Master Joshua Oleander pointed at them, and his mother said it. "They smell honey." She was spreading some honey on some sandwiches when she said it, but some other items came about at that time. A crowd of fifty or so people in no thing but white sheets came around the Tooth Rock. They walked across the deck, where it was white sand, to the surf, where it was gray sand. I was lying on my back at that time, looking at sea gulls, so I leaned up on my elbows to see them. A thin brown man in a bathing suit led them in to the surf, one person at a time. Then, he pulled each one of them over with a shout. He was exhorting

and inveighing, but the wind carried his words away, so I did not hear those words. The man kept on with his dunking until all of those sheets were gray too. The shivering people sang some verses. Then they shouted some hosannas. Mean while, those butter flies were circling over me. I do not know the reason. No honey was on me. I do not like to eat honey. Consequently, none of it was on my person. I did not attend to those butter flies. The sheeted people were holding my particular attention at that time. I had no attention to go around for butter flies, or for other persons who might be staring at my self at that time, but some people were doing it. They were these particular people. Miss Lula. Miss Isabel. The butter flies were coming on to my knees and my stomach. The butter flies were not in my stomach. The butter flies were on my stomach. It is the reason those two persons were staring at me, I imagine. I have not asked them. Miss Dee Light Brown and Master Joshua Oleander were not staring at me. They were hitting each other's heads with sand pails and issuing noises that persons of that kind will issue under those circumstances. Neither did those children have any attention left over for the butter flies, after Master Joshua Oleander first pointed them out to us. They were busy.

When you are the object of attention, then you will often give some attention back, of course, so, after some while, my attention moved over from those wet singing people to Miss Lula, as well as to Miss Isabel. I found that they were paying me attention, so I said, "Whut?"

Miss Lula said, "How you do that?"

I said, "Do whut?"

"That," she said. She pointed at my knees. Several butter flies were standing on them.

I said, "I ain't do no thing." I wiggled my knees. I said, "Shoo." But those butterflies only moved their wings up and down a little. They looked like they were airing themselves out, or some thing of the kind.

Miss Isabel said, "Can I get a ride with you?"

I sat up. "Now?" I said.

"At Easter," she said.

"Where to?" I said.

"Tell you later," she said.

I said, "Why you asking me?"

Miss Isabel rolled her shoulders, and shook her head, and blinked as though she was waking up from her dream, but she had not been dreaming. It is obvious. If you have been dreaming, then you have been sleeping. Miss Isabel had not been sleeping. She had been paying me attention. Therefore, she had not been dreaming. "Fuck if I know," she said. "You gonna drive me or not?" she asked. It is why I got with her.

Chapter 18

Miss Isabel makes me go to a movie.

Miss Isabel said, "I got to know you, before you drive off with me and my daughter." She had a tray with her. This is the reason. To hold up her food. We were in the cafeteria. I was in my booth. Miss Isabel was standing over me. She looked angry. Here is that particular reason. She did usually look that way. Her food was a carton of white milk and a wood bowl of salad. May be that she is going to throw those items at me, was my thought at that time.

I was surprised, of course. I said, "Miss Isabel, you all ready know me."

Miss Isabel rolled her eyes around. She put her tray down. Then she sat opposite me in my booth. "Why should I trust someone like you?" she said.

"Why?" I said.

She crossed her eyes. Then she uncrossed them. "I am asking you," she said. I am indicating the emphases. "We are going to do things together, so I can trust you," she said.

"All right," I said. It is why she made me go to that Christian Passover that she made me go to. It is all so why she made me go to the movies. We did not go to movies. We went to the movies. We went to one movie. I told you that I would tell you about it. Here it is. We went to see Dumbo, the well known animated cartoon about some elephants and so on. It was a repeat performance at the Dee Light Theatre and Cinema, about thirty five years after the first performance it gave there. Now it is all most thirty five years later still. It is thirty three years later, approximately. That is the life time of

your Savior, if you are a Christian. I am not a Christian, so, it is not the life time of my particular savior. I do not have a savior that I know of. I could use one.

When we went to see Dumbo, I borrowed the car of Miss Lula from her. I drove Miss Isabel, as well as Miss Dee Light Brown, to that movie in it. It was or is a shabby old blue clap board establishment, formerly known as the Dee Light Theater. Later on, the vaudeville circuit was disconnected or otherwise interrupted, so the proprietors of that theater went in to the movie line of showings, and elaborated the name of the venue. The out side is clap board. You clap in there. It is a jest. The in side is not clap board. It is obvious. The in side is brown velvet theater seating, and a brown velvet curtain up front with thick gold tassels, and so on. There is an auditorium, and a balcony, and two aisles in the auditorium, and no aisles in the balcony. I was paying attention to all of those details.

The reason was this. Miss Isabel whispered, "Pay attention to all of these details." She did not whisper it to me. She whispered it to Miss Dee Light Brown.

"Why should I?" Miss Dee Light Brown said.

Miss Isabel was holding on to her daughter by her chubby little hand. Her daughter's hand was little and chubby. Her own hand was not little or chubby. Her own hands were fairly large hands. Now she tugged at Miss Dee Light Brown's little hand with her large hand. "Just do what I say, Miss Dee Light Brown," she said. She cackled once, and hit me in my ribs with her elbow. It was not her elbow on her arm that was attached to her tugging hand. It was her other elbow.

Miss Dee Light Brown went in to a row of seats, but her mother pulled her out. "Not that one," she said. She looked up behind her self at the balcony and squinted in the dark. "You see two seats missing in a row up there?" she said.

I looked. There they were, in front of the ramp coming up from the main floor. Light lit the ramp up, and you could see two seats missing. You could not see those seats, of course. They were missing. It is more like a time I hit a girl's face with a steel roller skate when I was six years old. It was my left roller skate. After I hit that face of her'n, I could see two teeth missing. I did not see them. I saw they were missing. It was terrible, for these reasons. Bleeding. Screaming. The seats item was similar. How ever, it was not terrible. "I see them," I said.

Miss Isabel tugged her daughter along up the stairs to the balcony. I followed, of course. We all sat down in the row of the two missing chairs. Miss Isabel looked up the row. Then she looked down it the other way. "Change places with me," she said. She said it to me, not to Miss Dee Light Brown, so, I changed the places.

"Why we come up here?" I said.

Miss Isabel was rummaging in her purse. It was so tiny, a man could fill it with one curled hand. It is an innuendo. You can think about it. Miss Isabel did not look at me as she replied to that question. She just said, "You can think about it." So, I thought about it. No thing came to my mind about it, how ever. I was fairly nervous.

Consequently, I was fairly slow on the up take. You can take it up. I am done with it.

That was the first remarkable item. I have remarked upon it. The second one was, Miss Isabel lost her temper. She lost it at the movies. It is a jest. She did not lose it at me. She did not lose it at Miss Dee Light Brown. She lost it at the well known movie

genius, Mister Walt Disney. He was not present at the time, of course, but his movie was present. A line of carnies in that movie were pulling down a circus tent, or, they were pulling up that tent, I do not recall which one. Two items bothered Miss Isabel. Those carnies were brown. They had no faces. It is racist. "It's racist," Miss Isabel said. I was surprised. I do not know. Now, there is all so a singing crow in that movie. He or she is racist. So it seems to me.

Chapter 19

I creep out Miss Isabel.

Miss Isabel planned and desired to visit her mother in Fort Lee, New Jersey. Her mother had not met Miss Dee Light Brown, who, she was Miss Isabel's mother's own grand daughter, of course. It is a reason she asked me for a ride. She did not have an automobile. It is an other reason, but I did not have one. I did have a reason. I did not have an automobile. I rented an automobile. My reason was, I had no particular reason to drive all the way to New Jersey, but Miss Isabel was beautiful. Though she was not my beloved person, my desires moved over to her for some reason, or some other reason. It is curious. Assistant Professor Louis Morse observed it. "It's curious how easily you transfer your affections," he observed. "You're desperate," he observed. Then he said some thing that was not an observation. It was advice. "Don't do it," he advised, but I disregarded his advice. The reason I disregarded his advice is this. I was desperate.

Miss Isabel felt that she did not know me from a hole in the wall. "I don't know you from a hole in the wall," she said. "I got to know you better," she said. "Come to dinner," she said, so I went to dinner. That was in her kitchen in Crow Hollow. Her kitchen smelled like grease. Flies were in it. It was not exactly middle class. "It's not exactly middle class," she said. She had come down in the world. "I've come down in the world," she said. She pointed with her fork at Miss Dee Light Brown who, she was spitting food on to her frilly little blouse at that time. Miss Isabel Brown was chewing. Miss Dee Light Brown was not chewing. One was chewing. T'other was spitting. I have

told you. Miss Isabel swallowed her bolus. It was a bolus of chewed up Rice-A-Roni. Then she said, "Don't ever have a kid out of wedlock."

"All right," I said.

Miss Isabel wiped her hand across her lips. At most times, they were pretty, bowed lips. This time, they had rice grains on them, so, they were still bowed, but they were not pretty at this time. They were messy at this time. "My mom can't stand it. Wait 'til she gets a load of her," she said. She was nodding at Miss Dee Light Brown. "I ain't told her about Alistair." Alistair is the Reverend Alistair Beauson, who, he was between Mister Harry and Miss Lula in the cocaine supply chain. He is all so Miss Dee Light Brown's father. He was, at one time, a student in the Department of Drama of Amazon State College. Then, an other time, he was a student in the Department of Philosophy and Mysticism of Amazon State College. At yet an other time, which, it was a later time, he was a student at an entirely different institution, namely, the Amazon Institute of Divinity. That Institute ordained him to be revered for his learning and ability in divine matters. The Reverend Alistair Beauson was originally from the land of Sierra Leone, in the world of Africa. His mother brought him to the city of Gum when he was just three years old, so he might as well have been a Gummian, but he went round in a dashiki. It is a manner of speaking. It was several distinct and different colored dashikis, which, he wore them one at a time, of course. He had his own theater company some where on the campus, and he had a church some where off the campus. He was six feet and nine inches tall. An irrelevant fact is this. I my self am five feet and six inches tall. I thought that I would mention it, how ever. "All she knows," Miss Isabel said, "is, her eyes are blue. She's going to fall over." Then she said, "Tell me about your mother."

"Whut about her?" I said.

Miss Isabel said, "Anything you want to, man." She said, "I'm trusting you with my baby."

"I will not do any thing to her," I said.

"Fucking A you won't," she said. She put her fork up to my face. "I already know you're crazy," she said. "I want to know how crazy exactly," she said.

"I am not crazy," I said.

"The fuck you're not," she said.

"I am not," I said.

"Crazy people never know it," she said. "Enough with the blushing crap," she said. "I'm not going to feel sorry for you," she said. "I feel sorry for my self," she said.

"I am sorry for you too," I said.

"Fuck you," she said.

I said "No."

It was a jest, so, she said, "Ha ha."

"My mother is crazy," I said. "She is mad," I said.

Miss Isabel chewed up an other bolus. Then she swallowed it. Then she said, "Yeah?" She put her fork down. "Tell me," she said. I did not wish to look in her eyes, so I looked in to my Rice-A-Roni food. "Spill," she said.

"Whut should I say?" I said.

"How should I know?" she said. "Does she talk to her self? Does she hear voices?" she said.

"She throws the furniture," I said.

"She's violent," Miss Isabel said.

I said, "No."

"She's violent," Miss Isabel said an other time.

I said "No," an other time.

"You throw any furniture?" she said.

I said "Huh."

"You're getting mad," Miss Isabel said. "Should I be afraid of you?" she said.

I looked up. "No," I said. The day was warm. The arm pits of Miss Isabel were sweating. I gazed on her wet, black, arm pit curls. She was in one of her tank tops, of course. It was a blue one.

Miss Isabel raised her arms high up. Then, she wiggled her fingers. Then, she crossed her eyes. Then, she stuck out her tongue at me. "You wanna sniff?" she said. Then, she put her arms back down.

I did want to sniff, of course, but I did not say it. I did not say any thing.

"You creep me out," she said.

I pushed my self away from the table. "I shall go home now," I said.

"You're a virgin," she said.

I stood up. "I am going," I said.

Miss Isabel got a hold on one of my wrists with her hand. It was her right hand. It was strong. It was warm. "I'm sorry," she said. I looked at her hand on my wrist. My reflex was happening. She let go of my wrist. "Okeh," she said. So, I went home at that time.

When I got home, my friend Assistant Professor Henry Shine was on the telephone in the parlor. He waved at me to come over and he put his hand across the telephone. "It's for you," he said. So, I took the telephone from him.

I said, "Hello?"

Miss Isabel was on there. She said, "You all ways walk off like that?"

I said, "Some times."

She said, "What if you get mad at me in the middle of nowhere or somewhere like that?"

I did not get her point, so I said, "I do not get your point."

"I'm trusting you with my daughter," she said.

I said, "You are?"

She said " 'Course I am doom cough," or, some other words that sounded like Doom Cough, perhaps. "You can't just walk off like that with a kid around," she said.

"Around where?" I said.

She said, "Oh man. Can I trust you or not?"

I got her point then, but I did not want to promise her any thing. Here is the reason. I was sulking. So I said, "I am sulking."

She said "Fine," and she hung up.

I went in to the kitchen to take off labels. They were Uncle Ben labels and Aunt Jemima labels. They were on a card board box of rice grains, and a card board box of pan cake powder. I thought of it whiles I was riding from Miss Isabel's house in Crow Hollow to our own house on my bicycle. Our house is not on my bicycle. Probably, you did not think it was. You might, how ever. I thought of Uncle Ben and Aunt Jemima on

their labels at that time. Miss Dee Light Brown made me think of them, so I determined that I would take them off, so, I was determined to do it. Assistant Professor Louis Morse was in the kitchen, chopping some greens on a chopping board. I started tearing at our box of Uncle Ben's Rice. He said, "My good man."

I was tearing at the box with my teeth. I spit out some card board and I said, "Whut?"

"One eats the contents," he said. "One cooks the contents, and then one eats the contents. One does not eat the package that contains the contents," he said.

"I am not eating it. I am biting it," I said.

Assistant Professor Louis Morse raised his eye brows up. His face donned a huffy expression. "Well, that explains everything," he said.

We had a telephone in the kitchen, as well as the one that we had in the parlor. That telephone rang, so Assistant Professor Louis Morse picked it up. After he picked it up, he said, "Professor Morse." After he said "Professor Morse", he frowned and he handed it to me.

I said, "Hello."

Miss Isabel said, "It's me."

I said, "I am tearing off a label." I spat out some card board. I said, "Excuse me."

"Let's not fight," she said.

"All right," I said.

"I'll trust you," she said.

I said "All right," an other time. Then she asked me to go to that Passover for Christians with her. I have told you. So, I went.

Chapter 20

Untoward events.

Now I am going to tell you some untoward events that happened when we drove north. That pronoun We in the prior sentence means these persons. Miss Isabel. Miss Dee Light Brown. My self. We did not all drive, of course. It is a manner of speaking. Only two of us had the skills for driving an automobile. Only one of us had a license for driving an automobile. Miss Isabel had the skills, but she would not do it. "I been driving since I was eleven," she said. "But you've got a license and I don't," she said. So, only one of us drove, who, it was my self.

We were discussing the matter on the other side of a tunnel. It had interesting tiles. Engine sounds boomed around in it. The tunnel made my eyes bulge. It had eight lanes, but it seemed too narrow. It seemed that the tiles on the tunnel were scraping my elbows. They were not scraping my elbows, of course. They were fifty or sixty feet away from my elbows, of course, but they did not seem to be as far away as that. They did not seem to be far away. They seemed to be next to my elbows. It is the reason my eyes bulged. So I said, "Why do I have to drive, all ways?" It is when Miss Isabel said, "You've got a license and I don't."

"Why ain't you get one?" I said. I was panting at that time, for the following reason. To slow up my heart.

"I didn't say I didn't get one," Miss Isabel said. "I said I don't have one," she said.

"Why ain't you have one?" I said.

"I had one," she said.

I said, "All right."

She said, "I got one."

So I said, "All right," an other time.

"They took it from me," she said.

"Who?" I said.

Miss Isabel bumped her lap. Miss Dee Light Brown was sleeping in it. "I'll drive later, and you can have this thing a while," she said. "When it's safer," she said.

I whipped my head one way. Then, I whipped it an other way. I saw these items. Trees. A hawk. Automobiles. "Ain't it safe right now?" I said.

"Cops took it. Or, I guess it was the judge," she said. "Mean fuck," she said.

I whipped my head more. "Whut am I looking for?" I said.

"You're good. It's me they like," she said.

"Who?" I said.

"Cops. Like flies on horse shit," she said.

"How comes it that they like you so much?" I said.

"Sign on my back says Bust Me. No. I think they put a secret message on the bumper of my Volkswagen," she said.

"I did not know that you had a Volkswagen," I said. I said, "Louis has one."

"I cry when I see it," she said.

"Why?" I said.

She said, "Because, doofus, I sold it to him. I sold it to him when they took my license. Lula never gabbed about that?"

I said, "No ma'am."

"They said I was speeding," she said.

"How fast were you going?" I said.

Miss Isabel bumped Miss Dee Light Brown some more. She woke up and whimpered. "Never mind," Miss Isabel said.

I said, "All right."

"Hundred thirty miles an hour," she said.

I said, "Oh."

"I hit Mayor Lee's dog," she said. Lee was His Honor, Sergeant Robert E. Lee VI. He was the Gum mayor at that time. "Wish it was him and not his damn hound," she said.

"Well that is too bad," I said. It is a conversation. We had several conversations, for we had to drive or, rather, I had to drive, on two different days, to arrive in New York City from the city of Gum. I will not tell all of them to you, for this reason. I do not remember all of them.

Here is one that I recall. "You asshole." Miss Isabel said it to me when I left the spare automobile keys in a steel mesh waste basket at a road side rest. "They'll make us pay for it. Go back," she said, so I went back. Here is an other one. "You fucking asshole. What a fucking jerk." It is what she said, when I locked both of the automobile keys in the same place. That place was in side the automobile. The doors of it were locked. Then, we could not open them, of course. We were in the well known Borough of Brooklyn at that time. It is well known for several reasons. Here are some of the reasons. The Brooklyn Dodgers. Mister Walt Whitman. The Gallo brothers. The Gallo

brothers lived at, or near by, President Street. You have heard of them, if you have listened to the well known rock and roll singer Doctor Bob Dylan sing about them. Doctor Bob Dylan is my most favored singer. As you may know, Doctor Bob Dylan is from Minnesota. There fore, he is not from President Street. How ever, he sang a song about Mister Crazy Joe Gallo, who was at his President Street address in the song. We were on President Street at the particular time that Miss Isabel said, "You fucking asshole," and so on. I walked down President Street by my self. Miss Isabel did not wish to accompany me. I looked out for Mister Crazy Joe Gallo. I did not see him. I did not look out for him on account that I wished to see him. I did not wish to see him. Consequently, I was glad that I did not see the fellow. I was not seeking him. I was seeking an open garage, but those garages are generally closed on Sundays. The day was a Sunday. There fore, those garages were closed. There fore, I did not find an open garage, of course. So, I walked back to Miss Isabel.

I said, "No body was open." It is some more of that conversation. I do not recall the rest of it. Some telephone calls in a telephone booth ensued. I used up my quarters. Then, Miss Isabel used up her quarters. Then, we made some collect calls for a while. Then, we asked some people to call us back, so we spent the after noon of that Sunday standing at that telephone booth on President Street, waiting for telephone calls. I was keeping my eyes open for Mister Crazy Joe Gallo, or one of his brothers, or one of his nephews, perhaps. Miss Isabel was keeping her own eyes open. She was looking for police men, but she was not seeking any of them. Here is what I recall of President Street. An empty street. The telephone booth. White curbs. After the sun was down, a fellow from Avis Rent A Car, or Hertz Rent A Car, or some other Rent A Car, came to

open the door of our rent a car. Then, he opened it. It was the end of that particular conversation. It was a black mark against me.

When I lost the spare keys was a black mark. Then, when I lost both keys, that was a black mark, so, I had two black marks. It is a mean of only two thirds of a black mark per loss of one key. It is a favorable rate, in my opinion. May be that is why I lasted so long, but I did not last all the way, which was the way to an acceptance of my offer. I have not told you of that particular offer. I will tell you of it when I reach the proper place. I have not reached it. The proper place for telling you of my offer is when I make my offer. It is my opinion. It was an offer of my hand. It is a figure of speech, of course. If I had offered my plain unfigured hand, then I would have had yet an other black mark, no doubt. I have not made my offer at this place in my tale. I have only mulled over making it, which is my reason for keeping my tally of my marks. For example, say I lose some keys in a steel mesh waste basket, or in some other waste basket, or in the back of an automobile, for an example, while I am mulling my offer. Then I will look over at Miss Isabel. Her face will be suffering some contortions at that time. Then I will think Uh Oh. I am tallying my black mark at that time. It is how I did it.

Here is a reason that I mulled my offer, with out I had yet made my offer. It was not a reasonable notion. It was an unreasonable notion. It was a witless notion. I was not a witless person, in my opinion, at that time. Why it was, that in my opinion I was not a witless person, is I knew that it was a witless notion. Here is a summary of this paragraph as it has proceeded so far. I was not a witless person. It was my thought at that time, but my thought at the present time is this. If you know some thing is witless,

yet you go ahead and do it, then you are witless. Consequently, my present thought is, I was a witless person, though I knew that it was a witless notion. I suppose that you have this question. I have it. Why did you come to be a witless person, Willy? I do not know why. Here are some reasons that it was a witless notion to offer my hand to Miss Isabel. I did not wish to give her my hand. She was not going to take my hand. Here is a reason that those reasons were not in my mind at that particular time. I was witless.

Chapter 21

I cross the river.

After the Avis Rent a Car fellow, or the Hertz Rent a Car fellow, or some other rent a car fellow, let us in to the rent a car, we drove to a Washington Heights location, which is a location in the well known Borough of Manhattan. Then, we parked the car. Then, we got out of the car. Then, we walked across the Hudson River. We did not walk across like Jesus Christ. We walked across like pedestrians on a bridge, which, we were on one. It was the well known George Washington Bridge. The sun was setting. The day was Easter Sunday. The date was the eighteenth day in April. The year was 1976. I am reminding you. The time was approximately seven twenty three post meridiem. I am probably not reminding you, for you probably did not know. I know. I knew. It was a memorable day for me. It may have been memorable for you as well. I do not know. It is a mystery to me. You are a mystery to me. I do not know who you are. I do not know any thing about you. How are you? It is a rhetorical question, of course. You can not tell me how you are, but I can tell you how I am. I am well. I hope you are well as well. Good luck to you.

The reason that it was a memorable day for me is, some items that I remember. Here they are. The sun set. Carrying Miss Dee Light Brown. She was more light than I had expected. Offering my hand to Miss Isabel. I do not remember any other items, except some items I have mentioned to you all ready.

Here is what I remember about the sun set. Golden clouds. They were over the Washington Heights. As I remember them, those heights are dark cliff sides on the west

side of the Hudson River. We were walking in that particular direction. The Washington Heights are dark when the sun is setting over them, as I recall. They are purple with white streaks, it seems to me. That seeming is in retrospect. It is not in prospect. I am not planning an other look. The streaks are chalk. The chalk is calcium. The calcium is the earthly remains of extinguished beings, which were microscopic, or, would have been microscopic, if there had been microscopes to peek at them with, while they were in being. That was several eons back. An eon is so long in its duration, I can not conceive it. You can, perhaps. It is some thing I do not know about you, of course. I doubt that you can conceive, it how ever. It is too long. I remember, or seem to remember, walking towards the sun set. Miss Isabel was north of me. She was walking too, of course. She was on my right side, so she was on my north side. She was on the water side. I was on the road side. Automobiles were blasting by. It was blasts of noise and heat. Miss Dee Light Brown was not walking. She was sleeping, or, pretending that way. It was so I would keep on carrying her, I imagine. I would have been glad to do it either way. I seem to remember it, or, I do remember it. It is my all time favored memory, or, seeming memory. The weight of Miss Dee Light Brown in my arms was a golden energy, it seemed to me, it seems to me. Sic. That Sic is to say, It Is Not A Typo. The golden energy started out in the muscles of my back and my arms. They were the muscles I was carrying her with, of course. The golden energy went out of those muscles, in to my blood. Then, the golden energy flowed up to my heart. Then, it fluttered. The golden energy did not flutter. My heart fluttered. Miss Dee Light Brown weighed heavily on my muscles, for I am not a strong fellow. I am a weak fellow. I did not mind, it how ever. Miss Dee Light Brown was breathing on my neck. Here is how it felt. Warm.

Cool. Then, warm again, and so on. I was happy at that time. It is a reason an item will be memorable, so I remember it, apparently.

Miss Isabel is often a talkative person, but she did not talk on the bridge. I did not talk on the bridge either. Neither did Miss Dee Light Brown talk on the bridge. You can not talk when you are asleep. It is obvious. When we were at the other end of the bridge, which, it is the western end of it, of course, we were in the town of Fort Lee, New Jersey. It is on the other side of the Hudson River at a given time, if you are on the eastern side at that time. The mother of Miss Isabel was in that town. So, we were going to that town. So, we walked to that town. So, we crossed the river. So, we walked over the bridge. It is why we happened to be on it.

Here is a curious matter. I do not remember meeting that woman. Every thing about that day, after I put down Miss Dee Light Brown and I conversed with Miss Isabel, has evacuated my memory. I do not remember all of the conversation. It is like this. You are taping a conversation on your cam corder. The tape runs out.

Here is the part I remember. It is not much of a memory. I am fore warning you. First, I put down Miss Dee Light Brown on her feet. Then I said, "Oof." I did not make a sound which one might indicate, by a literary convention, with the word Oof. I said the word Oof.

Miss Isabel said, "She's getting big."

I said, "It is all right."

She said, "Everything's all right with you, these days."

I said, "That is true."

She said, "You're too agreeable."

"I do not agree," I said.

"Ha ha. You're too happy. Why are you so happy?" she said.

I said, "I am not so happy." I was lying, of course. I told you. Hence, you all ready know it.

"You look too happy," she said.

"May be that I am," I said.

"I don't like where this is going, Willy," she said.

"I am happy that you are here with me," I said.

She said, "That's enough of that."

"You are the most beautiful person I ever saw," I said. It was an other lie, but I was too happy. I glossed over it. I jumped right in to it. Then I said, "Will you please marry me?"

Miss Isabel did not answer me. She did not look at me. She turned away from me. She was looking back at the bridge, so I said, "Will you?"

Miss Isabel continued not to answer me. She continued not to look at me, either. She continued to look at the bridge. It was curly gray steel in a blue sky. The fellows who built that bridge, when they built it, they curled the steel a good deal, in those days. Those fellows are long gone, of course. They are extinguished. Where have they gone to, I wonder. To the after life, or to the under world, or to some other world? I do not believe they have gone any where. I do not believe they are any where at all. I do not know, of course. It is an other mystery. After she was done with her looking at the bridge and so on, Miss Isabel made reply to me at last. She did not answer me. She merely replied to me. Her reply was this, as I recall. "I'll tell you later."

The blue was darkening. The gray had golden high lights. They were from the last sun light. That light was spilling all over the edge of the cliffs. It did not want to leave the cliffs, perhaps. It was spilling its self on them to bid them fare well, perhaps. I do not call the high lights Gold High Lights. I call them Golden High Lights. The reason is, high lights are not made of gold. They are made of light. They are only the color of gold. There fore, I call them Golden. When I was carrying Miss Dee Light Brown, the energy in my self was not made of gold. It felt like gold. There fore, I do not call it Gold Energy. I call it Golden Energy.

I do not know what Miss Isabel looked like, exactly, at the time when she said, "I'll tell you later." I was not looking at her at that time. I was looking at the sky, and so on. I have told you. I would have liked to know what she looked like at that exact time. I would have liked to know, what did she look like, exactly? I still would like to know it. I turned from the sky, and so on, to see. My tape ran out.

Chapter 22

Disasters.

The walls of the tunnel stood some what further from my rent a car's doors when I drove through it the second time. The second time, of course, I was driving south. I was driving north the first time, of course. The tunnel was more relaxed the second time, as it seemed to me. That tunnel is a half cylinder of amber tiles with black grout, or a similar grout, between those tiles. The tiles do not make a lattice, as I recall. I might be mistaken. The tiles are off set, as I recall. The corner of a tile is at the midpoint of the next tile. My eyes in my rent a car hummed on their way through those tiles. Those tiles are like a corrugation in the air. A corrugation on a road bed will bounce a rent a car with a small amplitude and a high frequency. It is a hum, of course. Those black lines of grout, or some similar grout, went by my sight that way. A small amplitude. A high frequency. It was an other hum. It was an eye hum. My rent a car was humming. My eyes were humming. Then, the eye lids on my eyes were cumbering me, so those eye lids came down over my eyes, just like wood shutters. Wood shutters came down over the store front of the drug store on Fox Street in Culptown. It was my mother's child hood street. It was my child hood grand mother's street. It was a corner drug store. It was on Fox Street, so it was on the corner of Fox Street, of course. The wood shutters came down on it every night when I played in that street when I was a child. I played in that street once in a while. Some one might take a wrench to a fire hydrant in front of the building, which, it was a building with this address. 931 Fox Street. I would hop or dash through the spout of water from the fire hydrant in my under pants. The fire hydrant was

not in my under pants. I was in my under pants. Those under pants were blue on their back side. They were white on their front side. I was wool gathering on those under pants in that tunnel. The under pants were not in the tunnel. You might say that they were in it, how ever, by transitivity of the In Relation. I was in the tunnel. My mind was in my self. Those under pants were in my mind. It was a train of associations. First, eye lids. Then, shutters. Then, fire hydrants. Then, under pants. Those shutters were proof against a disaster, such as a hurricane blows through Culptown, for example. The hurricane uproots a lamp post. Then that lamp post flies through the air on the mighty wind. Then it lands in the window of the drug store on the corner next door to 931 Fox Street. It is not a likely scenario. It is an unlikely scenario. Here is a likely scenario. A drunken bum, or a drunken thief, or a sober thief, throws a brick through the window. It is an other disaster, if you are a drug store proprietor. It is a reason for shutters. Here is an other disaster. A six year old girl is in the lobby of the apartment building at 931 Fox Street. The year is 1929. I do not know the date of the year. I do not know the day of the week. I do not know the time of the day. I know whether it is a morning, or it is an afternoon. It is a morning. The girl is playing a game with a small pink rubber ball and some small shiny metal toy tops. They are called Jacks. I do not know the reason. A person, who is playing this game, bounces the ball. Then she snatches some of the jacks. She snatches as many of those jacks as she can, before the ball bounces an other time. The lobby of the apartment building has a floor tiled with small pearly white tiles, with black grout, or some similar grout, between the tiles. I know the color of those tiles. I have seen those tiles. The girl is humming, as girls are wont to do in those circumstances. Then a man picks her up from behind her self. She can not see him in

that position. He claps his hand across her mouth, so she can not call out some thing such as No or Mama. Then he carries her to the roof of 931 Fox Street. He does some other deeds up there. I do not know what they are. He does them, how ever. It is an other disaster. Then, the man does not smash the little girl in her head with a brick. He does not strangle her with his hands. He does not stab her through and through with a knife of some sort, or some other sort. Those are some other disasters. They are not this disaster. In this disaster, the man puts the girl in the dumb waiter. A dumb waiter is a tiny elevator. It has a door in the apartment kitchens, one on top of the other. The apartments are one on top of the other, so the kitchens in them are one on top of the other as well, of course. The dumb waiter is the size of a milk box. It is for a crate of milk. The little girl is not a crate of milk, but the man puts here there. Later on in that day, her mother finds her in the dumb waiter. She is alive, but it is a disaster. There are eight thousand or so disasters in the town of Culptown. It is a jest.

Here is an item I learned about driving a rent a car. Do not wool gather on disasters when you are driving a rent a car in a tunnel. If you do it, then your rent a car will glance off a car in the next lane. Then your rent a car will turn very slowly, or, it will turn very quickly. It is hard to tell the rotational speed of your rent a car in a disaster of that sort. Time, or how you feel the time, stretches just like Bonomo's Turkish Taffy in circumstances of that kind. Bonomo's Turkish Taffy is a candy that was advertised on television in Culptown. A clown would stretch it. It is how I know that it stretches. I do not know from a direct experience of Bonomo's Turkish Taffy of my own. I did not have a direct experience of Bonomo's Turkish Taffy. I did not have a direct experience of any taffy. I never have eaten any taffy. The reason is, I do not like taffy. Here is the reason

that I do not like it. It stretches. After your rent a car has turned two or three times in the tunnel, then, every one else in the car will wake up from their sound slumbers. Then they will start their screaming. It is an other disaster, of course. When that particular disaster is done, then, you stand on the side of the road out side the tunnel, exchanging your insurance information with several persons who are agitated, upset, and angry with you. Then you steal a look at your traveling companions. They are agitated, upset, and angry with you as well. It is still an other disaster, of course. It is the sort that might happen to you. It happened to me, so I should say, do not wool gather in the tunnel.

After you have had your spin out in the tile tunnel, you will not rest all the way home any more. You might tarry in a rest stop, or in a restaurant in the District of Columbia, for example. You might be sitting at the counter for malts and hamburgers and French fries in J. C. Pennies, for example. A fellow on the next red stool might look you all over. He might be puzzled by your colors. Only one of you all is brown. She is a small girl with two nappy pig tails. I do not suppose that two white persons with one brown child were a usual sight in the District of Columbia in those days, which were days in the year 1976, of course. Then that fellow might address you. He might say, "Are you married?"

You are anxious, for you have not received your answer to your offer, so you might hesitate to respond. Then your traveling companion might say, "We're thinking about it." You will get a thrill if she says it. Your heart will bump against your breast bone. Your eyes will stay open all night whiles you drive your rent a car on the highways and the byways, and so on. Your traveling companions will curl up in the back seat and drift off again, but the woman might say, "No more stunts, or I'll kill you myself," with

her eyes all ready shut before she falls to sleep. You will not sleep. You will drive with your eyes open. It will be difficult. Then it will be more difficult. Then it will be yet more difficult to hold them open like that, but you will do it. The head lights of your rent a car will shine on the trees out side of Gum at four hours ante meridiem. They will appear as gray trees. The leaves on them will appear to be gray. The trunks on them will appear to be gray. The road signs on the road you are driving on will appear to be gray, except, the letters on the road signs on the road you are driving on will not appear to be gray. They will appear to be blazing white fire. For example, the STOP signs. It is how items appear at four hours ante meridiem. Your eye lids will cumber your eyes to a painful degree when you are driving the last mile or so in your rent a car, yet you will keep your eye lids up all the way. It is a difficult accomplishment, which you will remember. It is will power. Will is a faculty of choosing your own future. I must change my paragraph at this time.

"Will is the faculty of choosing your own future, Willy. That is why it is called 'will'." Assistant Professor Louis Morse said that to me at one time. "You are fortunately named." He said that to me as well. "Perhaps you are a fortunate soul," he said, after he said those other matters. "It depends," he said. The paragraph is changing here as well.

"Whut does it depend on?" I said.

"Oh, all sorts of things," Assistant Professor Louis Morse said to me, the time that I said, "Whut does it depend on?"

I said, "Whut, for example?" at that time.

"I cannot say," he said back to me at that time.

"Why not?" I said at that time.

"I cannot say that, either," he said at that time.

Was I fortunate, or was I not. I can not decide it. You can decide it, perhaps, or some other person can decide it, but I am not going to decide it, for this reason. I can not. Assistant Professor Louis Morse was fortunate, or he was not fortunate. He may have been unfortunate. He had some misfortune coming soon, when I was driving at four hours ante meridiem. I am going to tell you about it soon. It is a different Soon, of course. I am not going to tell you about it now, how ever. You will have to wait for it. It is in the story after this story. I hope that you can wait for it. If you can not wait for it, you can turn the pages to that story. You ought wait. You will miss my final disaster in this particular story, if you do not wait. It would be your missed fortune. It is an other jest.

Here it my final disaster. When we got to Crow Hollow, it was four fifteen ante meridiem. Rain was falling. It started falling as soon as we had got to Gum. You could not see it, but you could hear it. You could feel it, too. It was heavy on our skins when we walked in to Miss Isabel's house. Miss Isabel had a friend. Her name is, or was, Missus June Beam. Missus June Beam was an older woman who cared for Miss Dee Light Brown when Miss Isabel was working, or when she was occupied other wise. Miss Isabel had promised Missus June Beam the use of my rent a car for two or three hours on the day we came back in to town. It was the day in question at that time, for, we were back there, of course. For my own part, I was reluctant, but I agreed to it. I was agreeable. I was too agreeable, perhaps. Miss Isabel said so. I have told you. Now you are probably thinking that this next disaster is an other automobile disaster with Missus June Beam in it. If you are thinking it, I would not blame you, but Missus June Beam is

not in this disaster. It might not have come about if not for her, but she is off to the side of it. Her part in it was to deprive me of the use of my rent a car. I have done with her for now. She has deprived me of it.

Miss Isabel was putting off her leather jacket with a rabbit fur collar. It was soaked wet, of course. You could have smelled the rabbit fur, if you had been there. You were not there, but I was there. So, I smelled it. This is what it smelled like. Rabbits.

I said, "I am going now."

Miss Isabel said, "Going where?"

"Home," I said.

Miss Isabel was wiping some rain off her hair. She did it by slicking her hands over it. Then she would shake water off her hands. Then she would repeat those motions. When she slicked off her hair like that, she would raise her arms, of course. Then, I would see her arm pits. She was like Miss Lula in some respects. Both of them were the loveliest women you ever saw. It is not possible, of course. It is only a manner of speaking, of course. They were both given to leaving the hair to grow on their arm pits. Miss Isabel's arm pit hair was a different color than the other arm pit hair, which, it was Miss Lula's arm pit hair. Miss Lula's arm pit hair was like soft dry golden hay, unless it was wet, of course. Miss Isabel's arm pit hair was swirls of black hair. Those swirls did not put me in mind of hay. They put me in mind of some feeling. I do not know how to say what the feeling is, but here is an instance of when I get the feeling. Once I watched a woman who, she made her living dancing tangos on the stage in Zenith. I was in Dania Hall at the time. That was a dance hall in Zenith. This woman danced a tango in front of me. She glared in to my eyes. Then she tossed her head, which had a horn comb in it.

Then she raised her arms and clacked her castanets while her feet went mad with dancing underneath her long silk skirts. When that woman raised her arms, I saw her own particular arm pit hair. She did not shave hers off either. Then I felt a certain way. How I felt, when I looked at Miss Isabel's arm pit hair swirling, was that way. I have not conveyed it. I know it. You might surmise it, somehow. Or, you might ignore the question. It is up to you.

Miss Isabel tossed her own head towards the door. "In that?" she said.

"Yes ma'am," I said.

"Will you please lay off the Ma'am shit," she said. "Don't tell me you're gonna bike," she said.

"I am," I said. I had laid my bicycle by Miss Isabel's shed, which, it was a shed behind her house, before we started off, for this particular purpose, after I had agreed to lend Missus June Beam my rent a car. I try to plan ahead, when I can.

"Crap on that," Miss Isabel said.

I said, "Excuse me?" I was not wanting to be excused for any thing, of course. It is an other manner of speaking, of course.

"Just shut up about it and sleep over there," she said. She said it while nodding at a divan next to the door of her bed room.

I did not want to get more wet. I did want to sleep near Miss Isabel in her bed room, so I said, "All right."

Miss Isabel and Miss Dee Light Brown went in to the bed room. I laid myself on the couch. Then, some time went by. Then, Miss Isabel called to me. I got myself off the couch and I stood in the door way. Miss Isabel and Miss Dee Light Brown were in

their bed. They both had white night dresses. Miss Isabel was picking up Miss Dee Light Brown. Then she was dropping her on to the mattress. When she got dropped on to the mattress, then Miss Dee Light Brown would squeal. She squealed in delight, of course. Miss Isabel had her legs up all around Miss Dee Light Brown to keep her from falling off the bed, so her night dress was caught up on her knees, so her thighs, and so on, were open for me to see them, so I saw them. I saw Miss Isabel's female parts. I saw all of them. When you have not seen all of a full grown woman's female parts, then, they will make an impression on you, so Miss Isabel's female parts made one on me. Here is my impression. They had a great deal of hair. It was black hair, of course. Miss Isabel's hair was black. I felt this about Miss Isabel's female parts. I liked them, but I looked away. Miss Isabel looked up from her playing and said, "Willy?"

I said, "Whut?"

She said "Thanks for the ride and all. Shut the door?" So, I did. Then I laid on the couch. I thought about Miss Isabel's parts for a while. Then I woke up. It was dark. I did not know where I was. After a while I thought You Woke Up. There fore, You Were Asleep. Then I thought, The Rain Has Stopped. Then I knew where I was. I heard some noises then. A dark figure went by me in the darkness. It was darker than the general darkness, so I saw it. It was the size of a man. It was the same general shape as one too, but I was not sure. Here is the reason. It was dark. An other figure went by me. It was large, but it was lower down. I heard it panting. I heard the tips of its claws tip tap on the wood floor. It smelled like a wet dog. Then it barked once, so it sounded like a wet dog, or any old dog, of course. A wet one sounds like a dry one, of course. More or less. So I thought A Dog. Then I thought A Man And A Dog. I heard Miss Isabel's bed

room door creak open. Then it shut again. I felt an electric, horripilated feeling in my arms, my fingers, and my tongue. Then, I felt it all the way down in my toes. I did not feel it on account a strange man was in her bed room. A strange man was not in her bed room. The Reverend Alistair Beauson was in her bed room. I knew it for this reason. The man's voice was conversing with her voice, so I heard it. I did not hear the words of the voices, but I heard the persons of the voices. One of them was Miss Isabel, of course. The Reverend Alistair Beauson was the other one. I did not know his voice, for I had not heard it prior to that time. It was not a gruff voice. It was not a brutal, angry voice. It was a happy, friendly, laughing voice. So, I inferred that it was the Reverend Alistair Beauson's voice. It was a true inference. It was a justified inference. So, I knew that it was his voice. If you do not believe me, look up Gettier Mistake. It is on the Internet. If you believe Gettier, you will not believe me, how ever. Do not believe that fellow.

"Do not believe Gettier's Gettier mistake," Assistant Professor Louis Morse told me one time. "It is a mistake," he told me that time.

Miss Isabel was happy and friendly and laughing as well. Her voice was happy, I mean. Her voice was friendly, I mean. It was laughing. Then, it was groaning. The dog barked, then. Miss Isabel's groaning turned in to shouting. Then, it turned in to screaming. Then the dog's barking turned in to howling.

I was all so groaning. I had a couch pillow in my mouth, so Miss Isabel and her friend would not hear me. Here is what I was groaning. Oh God. Oh God. I was not knowing who heard me, or, Who heard me. I was groaning it any way.

Chapter 23

Assistant professors speak of love.

You forget some items of your life and times when thirty two years have passed by, if you are me. May be that you have not forgotten some of your items. You are not me, in that case. I have forgotten a great deal of the days after we came back to Gum. I went back to my work. It was teaching work. I was a scholar of elliptic curves. I have told you. I had that trouble with Miss Isabel. I, and Assistant Professor Joel Mercy, had that other trouble with Miss Lula. I remember that trouble, but I do not remember all the items of it. I am going to tell you of some Dammed Lake items of trouble, but I am not going to tell you of them now. I am going to tell you of them when it is their turn to come up. It is not their turn. It is the turn of some items about my friend Assistant Professor Louis Morse. Those items are items about my house mate Assistant Professor Joel Mercy as well, but I do not recall some of the constituents of those items, or, of the ante cedents of those items, or, of the post cedents of those items. It is like my tape of the George Washington Bridge and so on. A movie starts up in the middle. For example, here is an other movie in my mind that starts in the middle. It is a movie of the hall way at the main doors of Red Hand Land Conglomerated School District High School. They are glass doors. The sun is shining through them, on to some motes in the air in the hall way, on to ceramic bricks which the hall way walls are made of, as well as on to faces going on by in the hall way. Those faces have a bobbing motion. The hall way is bobbing up and bobbing down. It is like a view from a camera that is strapped to my head whiles I am walking down that hall way. I did not have a camera on my head. It is

not the view. It is like the view. I am walking. The hall way is bobbing. Then, a fellow comes around the corner in front of me. He bobs up towards me. Then, he and an other fellow on my left side have a conversation. This is the conversation.

The fellow who is on my left says, "How is he?"

The fellow who has come around the corner says, "He's on the operating table."

That scene of the movie stops. Then there is an other scene. I am walking by an elderly black fellow after I have left the high school. We have all left the high school. We have been dismissed. We are all going to our homes and so on to watch the terrible events on television. I am not a black fellow my self. I have not told you, so I am telling you now. I have seen plenty of black fellows, so it is not why I remember him. I remember him for this reason. He is dressed in the uniform of the Union Army from the War of Secession. He is singing softly some spiritual song. He is clasping an iron ball to his breast. The ball is chained to an iron cuff on one of his ankles. I do not recall which ankle. It was a remarkable sight. So, I remarked it. The year is 1963. The date is the twenty second day in November. I will not note the day of the week, or the time of the day. You can look those matters up, if you want to do it. It is my example. My movie, which I am telling you about, is an other one. I am going to change paragraphs. There is no rule that I know of, but I ought change it, it seems.

In this paragraph, the year is back to 1976. The date is the fourth day in June. The day is a Friday. The time of the day is two seventeen post meridiem, more or less. My friend Assistant Professor Louis Morse is standing in the parlor of the house which we are living in. It is the last class of his course God 101. He is holding his class in our house. I and my best friend, Assistant Professor Henry Shine, as well as our house mate

Assistant Professor Joel Mercy, are at the back of the crowd. It is a crowd of the students of that course, of course. They are sitting on the floor, or in the furniture of the parlor, whiles we are standing behind them. Assistant Professor Louis Morse is in his glory. He is pacing up and down in his three pieced suit. His finger is in the air. It is the right index finger of his right hand. His other hand has his gold watch in it. A teacher will often keep his time piece in view whiles he is providing his lecture. It looks particularly well if it is a gold watch, so it is natural that Assistant Professor Louis Morse did that way. He is smiling, or, I should say, beaming. His square Brillo™ style goatee is all ways pointing in the same direction that his finger is pointing. His head is tilted back, so his two horns of his Brillo™ style hair are tilted back, and he is all ways looking up. He is looking up at God, perhaps. He looks as though he is looking at that fellow, any way. May be that he is lecturing God. A person can lecture a God who is there, but he can lecture a God who is not there just as well, of course. This lecture is a grand summation of Assistant Professor Louis Morse's reasonings about Divine Beings. It is a grand show of his lecture brilliance as well, which my wits can not recapitulate, unfortunately. The reason we are watching it in our parlor is, it is a show. It is not a show for Assistant Professor Louis Morse's students. They have seen the show. It is a show for Assistant Professor Henry Shine, or for Assistant Professor Joel Mercy, or for both of those fellows. It is a not a show for me, but I am getting shown the show any way. Assistant Professor Louis Morse is saying in his deep voice some such words as, "Upanishad. Upanishad, dear boys and girls." It means to sit down near by a fellow. How I know that is, he said next, "It means 'Sit near me', kiddies," after he said his Upanishad.

At that time, Assistant Professor Joel Mercy, who was standing next to me, made a sound like a groan or a growl.

"From the existence of divine beings, we have followed an ineluctable logical process to the necessity of ethical thought," Assistant Professor Louis Morse said.

Assistant Professor Joel Mercy made his sound again.

Assistant Professor Louis Morse did not hear his sound, perhaps, or he chose to over hear it, perhaps. Over Hear is not to Hear as Over Look is to Look, unfortunately. I am saying it that way any way. He over heard it. Then, he chose to over hear it. It is how I choose to say it. "The six great sayings are?" he said at that time. No body said what the six great sayings are at that time, so Assistant Professor Louis Morse said, "Kids?"

None of the kids made an answer, but Assistant Professor Joel Mercy said, "Holy moly, Christ and malarkey," at that time. You could hear him say it. I could hear him. Assistant Professor Henry Shine could hear him, I surmise. All of the students together with Assistant Professor Louis Morse could hear him as well, I surmise. I surmise it for this reason. They looked at him.

Assistant Professor Louis Morse said, "Kids?" an other time.

Some young woman on the floor was crossing her legs. Those legs were clad in blue jeans and some pink fuzz material. She said some thing fast. It did sound a great deal like malarkey.

Assistant Professor Louis Morse said them over again, at a slower speed. " 'Aham Brahmasmi Ayam Atna Brahma Tat Tvam Asi Prajnanam Brahma Sarvam Kalvidam Brahma So'ham.' Good," he said. Then he said, "Notice the circle. First, I am the

Divine. Last, the Divine, which is in me, is here too. What ethical principle in our own tradition corresponds, little ones?"

At that time an alarm sounded, or an alarming sound sounded. That sound was a buzzing, blating, razzing sound, such as an alarming blast of a horn, or a blast of a fart. Assistant Professor Joel Mercy was blowing the blast from his lips, so I was alarmed, of course. I threw my glance at Assistant Professor Louis Morse. He was not alarmed, I should say. He was dismayed, I should say.

He said, "Joel?"

"Louis?" Assistant Professor Joel Mercy said. Assistant Professor Louis Morse popped his eyebrows once or twice. His lips pursed. He blinked several times. It was his famous put upon expression. "Here comes the famous put upon expression," Assistant Professor Joel Mercy said.

"Forgive me," Assistant Professor Louis Morse said. "I seem to have interrupted you," he said.

"Oh no," Assistant Professor Joel Mercy said.

"I haven't interrupted you," Assistant Professor Louis Morse said.

Assistant Professor Joel Mercy said "No no. It was I who interrupted you, Louis."

"Was it? I hadn't noticed," Assistant Professor Louis Morse said.

"Oh yes," Assistant Professor Joel Mercy said.

"My apologies, or something. Kiddies –" Assistant Professor Louis Morse said, but here came the alarm from Assistant Professor Joel Mercy another time. Assistant Professor Louis Morse stared at him a while. Then he snapped shut his gold watch. Then he put his watch in his watch fob. "Joel has something to say, it seems," he said.

"Oh no," Assistant Professor Joel Mercy said.

The lids on Assistant Professor Louis Morse's eyes were blinking quite rapidly at that time. "You're certain," he said.

"I was just wondering," Assistant Professor Joel Mercy said.

Assistant Professor Louis Morse said, "Yes?"

"What's with the kiddie shit, I mean, shtick," Assistant Professor Joel Mercy said.

Assistant Professor Louis Morse rolled his gaze over the students in front of him. The students rolled their own gazes back over him. Then, they rolled them over Assistant Professor Joel Mercy. Those students' eyes were round, so their gazes rolled that way. Their mouths were round as well, but their mouths did not roll. They just hung wide open. "Well, Joel," Assistant Professor Louis Morse said, "you've said it. It's shtick."

"Is it," Assistant Professor Joel Mercy said. He was stroking his walrus shaped moustache. It is not shaped like a walrus, of course. It is shaped like the moustache on a walrus, of course. Walruses do not have genuine moustaches, but you might imagine that they do. Assistant Professor Joel Mercy was leaning forward like a fellow or some other animal, a walrus, perhaps, preparing to scoop up some flipping, flopping, silvery fish, then to swallow it down. Yon Joel, he had his lean and hungry look. It is a jest.

"Theory-laden shtick," he said.

Assistant Professor Louis Morse said, "Why, yes, I—"

At that point, or juncture, or other wise designated moment in time, Assistant Professor Joel Mercy dumped his own words in there. "We know, Louis," he said. "No need to recite the catechism. But tell me," he said.

Assistant Professor Louis Morse tucked his hands on to his hips. He thrust his goatee and the rest of his chin up in the air. He raised his eye brows up high on his forehead. The whole ensemble said, "Go ahead and ask your question, I dare you," it seemed to me.

"It's sad, isn't it?" Assistant Professor Joel Mercy said.

Assistant Professor Louis Morse winced his eye brows. He blinked. He shook his head like a fellow shaking off a fruit fly, or a bumble bee, or a terrible question. Then he said, "Well, Joel, it isn't the sort of thing that can be sad. Or happy. Or irritated with a foolish, vainglorious, interruption of its lecture. Or any other mood. Don't you agree? Shtick, I mean."

"Sad," Assistant Professor Joel Mercy said.

In my opinion, Assistant Professor Louis Morse must have been at his wit's end, for he invited, or other wise laid him self open to, an other smart comment. He said, "As in –?"

"Oh, I don't know," his smart commenting fellow replied. "As in sad sack? Sad clown? Sad spectacle of please, everybody, love me? I'm not sure," he said.

The face of Assistant Professor Louis Morse was turning color at that time. It was a scarlet sort of color that proceeded down from his hair line, across his ears, then, on to his cheeks, under neath his blue beard stubble buried in his cheek skin. It has me in mind of an army of buried soldiers, all soaked in blood. After his beard stubble, the scarlet color proceeded in to his genuine beard, of course. You could not see it there, of course. So, I could not see it there.

Assistant Professor Louis Morse said., "Come, Joel. You're taking up the time of these important people."

Assistant Professor Joel Mercy put the wire ear hooks of his eye glasses on his ears again. He said, "You're so joyful when you play at love, Louis. Your joy resounds through the house. I wish I had your winning ways, Louis. Love comes your way with out all the begging you do. You don't have to beg for it. Why beg, Louis? No, it's sad." He said some other items as well, but I do not remember them. My movie cuts out.

Chapter 24

Miss Lula says some thing.

The last event that happened to me, when I was living at that rent a house, was getting moved out of it. My friends, and my other house mate, who were the three assistant professors that I have mentioned, of course, took leave of the land of Amazon. Summer was when assistant professors, and other professors, and other college people, would take their leave like that, of course. I my self did not take my leave. The reason is, there was no where for me to leave for. An other reason is, I had no money to get there. The three assistant professors had a variety of places, how ever. The place of Assistant Professor Henry Shine was his various family's places in New York City, and the town of Provincetown on Long Island, and some other places. The place of Assistant Professor Joel Mercy was in the city of Cambridge, in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, where he had to have his happiness with Doctor Sarah Ohm. The place of Assistant Professor Louis Morse was the State of New Jersey, where he had or did not have a restaurant enterprise. They all had some money as well, I suppose, for you can not buy your air plane ticket, with out you give the air plane company some of it, of course. Two of them came back to the land of Amazon after the summer was over, namely, Assistant Professor Henry Shine, as well as Assistant Professor Joel Mercy, but, having been shown no pity by Assistant Professor Joel Mercy, and for some other reasons, such as, he did not have his doctor's degree, and he was not ever going to have it, for example, the other one of them, namely Assistant Professor Louis Morse, elected not to come back. It is the reason that he started his restaurant enterprise, if he started one at that time. I do

not know if he did. I know this. I found the name of L. Morse on the Internet three years ago, which was the year 2005, of course. I was looking for it. I was looking for it with search engines, such as the Alta Vista search engine, or the Google search engine. Then, I found it with those search engines. Mister L. Morse was the proprietor of a restaurant in Hackensack, in the well known state of New Jersey. The restaurant was called *Speak, Silence Delicious Bagels*. I sent my e mail to Mister L. Morse. I said

Dear Mister L. Morse,

You do not know me, but I am a fellow named Willy Wilson. I am a friend of a fellow named Mister L. Morse, just like you. He is not just like you. I do not know if he is just like you, but he is named just like you, of course. I have lost track of that fellow. My particular L. Morse's given name is or was Louis. Are you him, which is to say, do you know me. Thank you very kindly in advance for your prompt reply. I am at this email address.

I remain very sincerely yours in deed,

Willy Wilson

Here is the reply of Mister L. Morse in its entirety.

I know lots of crazy cocksuckers.

It is not enough information, so I do not know if Mister L. Morse is or was my friend, of course.

When the assistant professors came to take their leave, I had my lucky break.

Miss Lula called me up on her telephone. I was in my bed room at the time. I was sitting

next to my wonderful mahogany desk. My knees were under it. My elbows were on the top of it. They were leaning on examination papers. I was grading those papers. Here is how I know that detail. I remember my red ink. At the time, one of our own particular telephones rang. I do not remember it in the same detail, but I infer it, for this reason. Assistant Professor Louis Morse came to my bed room door way and he said, "This is your lucky break." So I went down to the parlor, where we kept one of our telephones. I wanted to find out my lucky break.

Miss Lula was on the line. How I knew it was, I said hello. Then she said hello. Then I recognized her voice, of course. "Cinnamon just pulled some of my hair out," she said, so I expostulated as follows. Lawdy, or some other expostulation of the kind. "I pulled some of hers out too," Miss Lula said at that time. I said that was terrible. I wondered, how did it happen, so I asked her how it happened. "Push came to shove," she said. "She pushed, I shoved," she said. Then she laughed her deep laugh that I love. How ever, that laugh sounds better when her voice is close to your ear, than it does when it is in a telephone that is close to your ear, so it did not sound as good as that. Then she said, "Anyway."

She did not go on, so I said, "Yes ma'am?"

She said, "Anyway," an other time.

So I said, "Yes ma'am?" an other time.

At that time, Miss Lula used profane language. She said, "Shit." After she said "Shit", she said, "Can you do me something, Willy?" I said, of course I could, or words to that effect, or some other words to that effect. Then she said, "I got a place here for you to stay, if you want to."

I said, "Yes ma'am," still an other time, after she said it.

"Can you pay me sixty dollars for the month?" she said.

I said, "It may be. I have to find some work."

"Don't you have to worry about it," she said. "I got some for you," she said.

"Do you?" I said.

"If you like ice cream," she said.

Well, I do, of course, so I said, "Well, I do, of course."

"You know Small Mall by Kleagle Parkway?" she said. I allowed it, so she said,

"Go in to the Blue Parrot club in there and out the back door. Then you are in a hallway," she said. "The garbage pails are back there."

"Oh no," I said.

"I ain't asking you to be a garbage man," she said.

I said, "All right."

"I am asking you to be an ice cream man," she said.

I said, "All right," an other time.

"I want you to come in the back way," she said.

"Why do you want that?" I said.

Miss Lula did not answer a while. Then she said, "Caution."

"I did not know that you were cautious," I said.

"Well forgive me, Willy Wilson. You don't know a lot about me. Do you."

"I only know what you tell me, Miss Lula," I said.

"That's right," she said. Then she said, "You don't know about me what other folk tell you, do you."

"I do not," I said.

"Other folk have not told you anything, then," she said.

I had to think on it, so I said, "I have to think on it."

"Isabel?" she said.

I did not know what on this earth she meant by saying Isabel at that time, so I said, "I do not know what on this earth you mean by that."

"That's all right," she said. "You did set her up," she said.

"How did I?" I said.

"Kicking his dog and all," she said. "I didn't know you had it in you, Willy," she said.

"I did not kick a dog," I said. "What dog?" I said.

"Why, Alistair's dog," she said, so I understood her at that time. I was shocked.

"I am shocked," I said. Then I said, "I did not kick that dog."

Miss Lula said, "Isabel says you did."

I said, "Well, I did not. I did not kick no dog." It is the way I said it, which, it is not the same as if I said, I Did Not Kick No Dog, or as if I said, I Did Not Kick No Dog, of course. It made me angry. "It makes me angry," I said.

"She's angry too," Miss Lula said.

I thought it over. "It is a misunderstanding," I said.

"I'm sure it is, then," she said.

"She had ought trust me more," I said.

Miss Lula laughed at me. "I'm sorry. I'm not laughing at you," she said, but she was.

"Whut are you laughing for, then?" I said.

"You have got a lot to learn, that's all," she said.

I knew it, so I said, "I know it."

"When you are in the back of the Blue Parrot, I want you to knock on the next door. It's the Kool Kone place. You know it?" she said.

I said, "Sure I do."

She said, "Ask for Sniffles."

"All right," I said.

"Just tell him that Blondie sent you for the job. He'll give it you."

"All right," I said. Then I said, "What is his real name?"

"I'm sure I don't know. He don't know mine, either, and you don't tell him," she said.

"Really?" I said.

"And if he tells you his, don't tell it me either," she said.

"Why not?" I said.

"Because I'm no good at lying," she said.

"I am not following you," I said.

"All the better," Miss Lula said. "When is your last day there?" she said.

"Here?" I said.

She said, "That's right."

"How many days in June?" I said.

She said, "Don't you know?"

I said, "Thirty?"

"Good for you," she said.

I said, "Wednesday."

"How much stuff you got? Don't bring that desk," she said.

"I will get a truck," I said, and I did. The truck took my mahogany desk to a second hand store. I sold it for twenty dollars. I did not sell the second hand store, of course. I sold the desk, of course. I and Miss Lula took my other items over to her house in her car. The last item we put in to that truck was my book case. It was only three shelves of pine wood painted a slime green color. It is a jest, of course. Those shelves are really just a fine green color.

When we had put it in there, Miss Lula turned to me. She said some thing that has stayed with me. She was standing close up to me when she said it, so I was smelling her perspiration. I just loved to smell it, of course. I was looking at her arm pit hair, for this reason. I was looking at my fetish. It is where her perspiration that I was smelling was coming from, it seemed to me. I was watching her chest breathe. Her breasts were depending from the front of her chest, of course, so, they were breathing as well, of course. Her chest was breathing. Her skin was breathing. Her breasts were breathing. It is figures of speech, of course. You could see her nipples on them, or, I could. Her nipples were on her breasts, of course. Her nipples were not on the figures of speech, of course. Those nipples she had were behind her tee shirt. It was a white one. Dark nipples will show through one like that, I find. There fore, Miss Lula has dark nipples. I inferred it. I did not imply it. I inferred it. Here is what Miss Lula said. "Now I have moved everybody in your house." She laughed, then.

Part Two

Misery

Chapter 25

It all comes out of me.

Miss Lula had an other cat besides her momma cat. It had a name of Cassie or Cassandra, or, it had two names of Cassie and Cassandra. It was a question brought to my attention by my friend, Assistant Professor Louis Morse, when I lived in the house that we all lived in. For he has authored his unfinished dissertation in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, namely, "Names, Naming, And That Which Is Named: A Crypto-Kripko-Wittgensteinian Inquiry." It is not the same as an unfinished dissertation in fulfillment of the requirements, of course. It is not the same as a finished dissertation in partial fulfillment of the requirements, either, of course.

One fine day, Assistant Professor Louis Morse asked Miss Lula, "Is she Cassie? Is she Cassandra? Or is she Cassie and Cassandra?" Miss Lula was perching on his knees at that particular time.

"What's it to yuh?" Miss Lula said back to him.

"Naming is the name of the game." Assistant Professor Louis Morse said it to her.

The reason I know about it is this. I was in the room that they were in. It was the parlor. We were in it. When Assistant Professor Louis Morse said, "Naming is the name of the game," then, I said, "How do you win your game?"

He said, "One does not win a language game."

So I said, "How come?"

He said, "Language is a mug's game, dear boy."

"I suppose it is more like skimming a rock on the water, then," I said then.

At that time, Assistant Professor Louis Morse raised one of his eye brows. It is a trade mark he has. Often and often, I have seen him raise one of his eye brows. Then my best friend Assistant Professor Henry Shine would say, "There goes the trade mark eye brow." He did not say it this time. He would say it if he was in the room, of course. He was not in the room this particular time, how ever. He was not in the parlor where we were. He was skulking in his own room. He was not sulking in his own room. He was skulking in his own room. It was on account of Miss Lula, and so forth. It was skulking for this reason. If you are jealous that she is perching on the knees of your good friend, then, you might be sulking. But if you have got Miss Lula with child, and you have let her alone when she has gone to the abortion operator's room, and you are busy packing your bags for Manhattan, why, then you might be skulking.

After Cassie, or Cassandra, or, Cassie and Cassandra, let those six kitties come on out of her, then Miss Lula had an other cat besides Cassie or Cassandra and her six kitties, or, Cassie and Cassandra and her six kitties. That is a sum of eight cats, of course. The one I have not told you about was an old tom called Tom. Tom is not a tom any more, how ever. At this time, Tom happens to be a cat with out any qualities. Being a tom is a quality. There fore, Tom does not have that quality any more. There fore, Tom is not a tom any more. Q. E. D., or, Quod Erat Demonstratum, or, Quite Easily Done.

It is the upshot of a discourse I had with Assistant Professor Louis Morse on the destiny of dead beings. I might tell you about it. I will not tell you about it now, how ever. I might tell you about it later, how ever.

This is how it came about that Tom lost all of his qualities. In the morning after the night that I saw Cassie or Cassandra, or, Cassie and Cassandra, lying down in the bottom of Miss Lula's closet with all of those kitties she had let out, I was in the parlor. I was lying on the divan. I slept there most nights. I did not sleep a great deal that particular night, because I was meditating on my visions. It was all so on account of my reflex. That item did not ease up all night. I considered a course of action to ease it up, but I was ashamed to do it with Miss Lula only a few feet away, in her bed room, with her door blocked shut with her door stop. I soon got over that shame. I was not over that shame on that particular night, how ever. When I got over it was a while later, when I had noticed that, on occasion, there was some breathing sounds, and some other sounds, from behind Miss Lula's door. At that time, I concluded that Miss Lula her self was in no wise ashamed to make her own reflexes ease up on occasion, even though I was only a yard or two away, on the other side of that door she had. Then I thought, "What is good for the goose is good for the gander". It is an other saying that we have in the land of Amazon. At the time I am telling you about, it was not that time yet, how ever. It was a time prior to that time by a week or two. All that I could do, that I was not too ashamed to do, was to hold on to my reflex rather tightly, whiles I screwed my eyes shut rather tightly, and ran my inward eye over on my visions. Over again and over again, in a matter of fact.

I am considering, must I let you in on my visions, or must I not. Or, is it up to my own whim. My visions appear in my loneliest spaces of night time. I weep at them, some times. Other times, I laugh or I smile. I do not do much of any thing when I have them, most times. I only get a feeling. It is like a river coursing. My feeling is like it. My visions are not like it. An item, and your feeling about that item, are different items. I am like a bird of some kind, following the course of the river. My wings, I do not beat them a great deal. I keep them spread wide and still, and I tilt my head a bit. I feel a current of the air run across my pin feathers, then. I tilt my head, and the weight of my beak tilts the rest of me, then. It is a long beak. It is a heavy beak. It tilts all of me, and I drift on down towards this river that I am telling you about. There are hills and valleys, of course, but I am not attending to them much. I have eyes only for the river. It is silver in a silver light. That is when I weep at times. This weeper I is not the bird I. A bird will not weep, of course. It is the Willy I. It is Willy. It is I.

This morning I am telling you about, the day light started in through the window shades. Then it was ambient light. It did not have a point source. It was going on and off a variety of surfaces, such as the wall paper, or the little rug at the front door, or the ceiling, or the glass pane on the photograph opposite the dining room table of Miss Lula's great grand father. He had a bear skin on his lap with a one barrel shot gun on it, and so on. Miss Lula's great grand father was a trapper in the West Wood quite a long while ago. He had no teeth. It is an other story. It is not this story. In this story, the ambient light came on through my eye lids and put an end to my visions. I became aware that it was day time. Then I heard some howling going on somewhere. I became aware who was howling. It was Master Joshua Oleander. Master Joshua Oleander was

howling in the back yard, or so I surmise, for this reason. After some time, I heard that his howling was some what louder. Then I heard the kitchen screen door slam. How a screen door slams is different than how a normal every day door slams, of course. It is a light, hollow slam. It is not a heavy, solid slam. That is how you can tell the difference, of course. Well, there are only two screen doors in Miss Lula's house. The other screen door is next to the divan. I was lying on it. I was lying on the divan. I was not lying on the door. I could hear that the door slamming was not that door, for this reason. That door is too close to where my ear was at that time. So, it had to be the other door. The back yard is on the other side of that particular door, of course. There fore, I concluded at the time. This is what I concluded. Namely, that the location of Master Joshua Oleander, whiles he was doing his original howling, was the back yard. I did not even have my eye lids open at the time. It was a pure deduction.

After Master Joshua Oleander was howling for a while, then I heard Miss Lula groaning in her bed room. Then I heard her smacking her lips in there. Like this. Ptsa Ptsa Ptsa, or some thing along that line, or along some other line. It is a sound. May be, you spell it some other way, when you spell it. I spell it this way. Ptsa Ptsa Ptsa Ptsa, and so on. Then, Miss Lula took her breath in all at once, like a person breathing after a long time under the water. Then she woke up, I imagine. I imagine that she was sleeping during the preliminaries. I imagine that now she woke up, and she was holding her breath to listen. She was listening for Master Joshua Oleander, I imagine. Then, sure enough, he started his howling again. That was when Miss Lula said, "Gawd." Then, her feet hit the floor. I heard that hit. Then, I heard a sound I had not ever heard

before. I did not like it. It was quite loud. It was Tom, I imagine. I imagine that he was parting with his qualities.

I opened my eyes at that time. I saw Miss Lula go hurrying past my eyes, naked as any thing. It is a frozen picture I have in my mind. I can look at it any time I want to. I just close my eyes, and there it is. It is one of those Kodak™ moments. I did not have a Kodak™ with me at the time. I was just lying on the divan with no thing on my self but my boxer shorts. I would not have snapped my Kodak™ if I did have it, of course. It would not have been polite. I did not need one any way. I have told you. Miss Lula was on the other side the parlor and the dining room. She was in the hall, between the kitchen and her bed room. She was crouching and running in a certain manner, at the same time. She was running on account that she was in a hurry, of course. She was crouching on account she knew, or suspected, or feared, that I was snapping my Kodak™ at her. It is a figural Kodak™, of course. It is my own particular suspicion.

Here is what I see, when I see the frozen picture. Miss Lula's hand is covering her nakedness. It is the nakedness over on top. It is not the nakedness down under. Her hand is not covering that particular nakedness. She is crouching. It may be that she supposes she does not need to cover it. It is not a correct supposition, unfortunately. Unfortunately, I do see what she has down there. It is a brown puff and some gray scars along her belly. I like the brown puff. I do not like the gray scars, how ever. It does not matter. It is a picture I remember any way, because the brown puff has three dimensions. I studied pictures of a woman's nakedness before I saw any of it. You know in your mind that the brown puff, or, the blonde puff, or the puff of some other color, such as, a red puff, or a black puff, has three dimensions, when you do your

studying. If some one asks you, "How many dimensions is in that puff," you will say, "Why, three dimensions, of course." It is not the same as seeing all three of those dimensions in front of you, how ever. It is why I remember it.

Miss Lula dashed on through to where I did not see her and said, "Oh Tom." Master Joshua Oleander set up his howling again. Miss Lula said, "Oh, poor Tom." Then she said, "Master Joshua Oleander." He kept howling and she said it a few more times. Then he quietened down, and she said, "Willy." She did not speak my name loudly at all. She spoke my name as if I was listening and she knew all about it. It put a fright in me. What am I supposed to do, was my thought. She has no thing on, was my other thought. Am I supposed to go in there, was my still other thought. May be that I had some other ones that I am forgetting now. Such as, If I do, I will look at her brown puff, for example. Then she said an other time, "Willy." So I got up from the divan. Then I went in there, where Miss Lula was on the floor, looking at Tom. Tom had orange fur when he had qualities. After he was done with his qualities, his corpse still had orange fur. His teeth were showing. Feathers were in them. A bloody bird was next to him. It was a jay, which it was dead all so. It was a blue jay, but it was not blue. It was gray. It was a gray blue jay. Poor Tom, and, Poor jay, too. Those were my next thoughts. Their qualities were gone for ever. My thoughts' qualities were not gone, of course. Those two animals' various qualities were gone, of course. They were not animated. Master Joshua Oleander, poor child, he was next to them, weeping in to his hands. He was naked. His poor little penis was shaking. Miss Lula, she was not naked, how ever. She had got on her night dress. I do not know where it came from. I suppose it came from the kitchen. Miss Lula said, "He choked on it." She stood up and bent over

to smooth the hair on the head of Master Joshua Oleander. His hair is golden, shining hair. I have told you.

I said, "Gee whiz." It was a foolish saying, of course. I am not a fool, how ever.

Master Joshua Oleander said, "Help him."

Miss Lula bent over him and kissed his cheek. She said, "Momma can't help him. I am so sorry."

I said, "Whut happened?"

Miss Lula said, "I guess he wanted to show it, like he all ways do." She kissed Master Joshua Oleander an other time. "I guess he was in too much of a hurry." Then she kissed him again. "It is what I all ways tell you. When your mouth is full, chew. Don't talk or play or run."

Master Joshua Oleander said, "Momma." Then, he bawled a while. Miss Lula petted him. Then, a chime came along the street out side. It was an electric chime on an ice cream truck. Miss Lula stood up. She went to her wide maroon fake leather purse. I do not call it that. She calls it that. "Willy, have you seen my wide maroon fake leather purse?" She has asked it of me. An other time, she may ask, "Willy, have you seen my dainty black genuine leather purse?" It is her particular manner of speaking. My manner of speaking is this. They are pocket books. Miss Lula's pocket book was on the kitchen table. It is a genuine Formica™ one. She leaned over that table and dug in to her pocket book. You could see that Master Joshua Oleander could see that she was looking for a dime or a nickel for the ice cream. How you could see it, was this. His eyes were wide. So was his mouth. His mouth was just hanging there. No more bawls and howls were coming from it. He was still breathing hard and his eye lashes were wet

and dark from his former genuine tears. A yellow snot bubble was popping from one of his nostrils as well. I do not recall which nostril. It came out with a pop sound when he breathed. Miss Lula pulled a tissue rag from her pocket book. "Here," she said. She wiped his nose with it. Then she handed it to him. She said, "Throw it away when you go out." She put a dime in his hand. Master Joshua Oleander dropped the tissue rag on the floor between the dead gray blue jay and poor dead Tom. Then he left rather quickly. He was on his way to the ice cream truck, of course.

"He is in a hurry," I said. That was making conversation. Making conversation is when you say some thing to cover your tracks, of course. It is commonly some thing that the other party all ready knows, of course.

Miss Lula knew that Master Joshua Oleander was in a hurry, of course. She did not require my information on it. She saw it her self, so she said, "I see." She could see that I was covering my tracks. It is my own interpretation. At times, Miss Lula will say some thing that has more than one meaning at a time. It is rather clever of her. She was watching me. It was more than seeing. It was more than looking, too. I was looking at her puff, and so on. That is the reason she was doing her watching, of course. The kitchen door was open. The kitchen screen door was shut, but it did not keep out the sun light. The sun light was shooting through Miss Lula's night dress. I was standing on her other side, so the light went through her night dress. Then it got in to my eyes, of course. It was cutting out a silhouette, which it was a shadow of rippled hairs hanging down. They were between the legs of Miss Lula inside her night dress. I was fascinated. "Fascinated" is when you can not turn your eyes away, of course. I could not turn mine away. Miss Lula could see it, of course. So, when she said, "I see," then

she kept on watching me, of course. Any body would, I imagine. Turn About Is Fair Play. It is one more saying we have in the land of Amazon. Miss Lula kept on watching. I kept on looking. It was like this. I was trapped. I liked it, how ever. I did not like it as well, how ever, for this reason. She was watching. Or, I did like it that she was watching. I do not know. I do not know what she was liking, either. May be that she liked it. May be that she was trapped her self. I could not tell at that time. I can not tell at this time.

Did you ever say some thing you did not know that you were about to say, I wonder. I did it one or two times. One time on the island of Manhattan, for example, I said, "You son of a bitch," to Sean Flaherty, who, I have not told you about him, for a particular reason. I said it for a particular reason. I have not not told you about him for a particular reason. I am going off to a side track now. I am sorry I had to use my double negative. If I said, in stead, "I have told you about it for a particular reason," then, it would not mean the same way at all. I wish I could tell Assistant Professor Louis Morse about that. He might find it interesting. He might put it in a foot note, some time, if I told him. I am going back now. Sean Flaherty was an old friend of mine. I mean, he was old. He was a friend of mine. I only had known of him approximately fourteen months and three days at the time, how ever. He was a pious, Catholic fellow from Greenwich Village who, he wrote poems and other bullshit. "I write poems and other bullshit." He said it to me one time. It was the first time words just came out of me, I believe. That time, Sean Flaherty was talking me in to some thing I did not want to do. It was to go to a bawdy house. I did not know he was going to suggest such a course, so, when he did, I had a bolt of lightning in my breast. That is what it felt like. It scared me

awe fully. It was a surprise. So out comes "You son of a bitch" for some reason, or some other reason. I do not know why I said it. Sean Flaherty is not a son of a bitch. He is a friend of mine.

This time was similar to that time. I was looking at Miss Lula's hairs right through her night dress. She was watching me do it. My eyes came up her body in the dress. I did not see much more of it, at that particular time. One reason was, the arrangement of the shadows and the light. An other reason was, some tears were blocking my view. These tears were standing in my eyes for some reason, or some other reason. An other reason is, Miss Lula had a blue stare in her own particular eyes. My eyes came up to her eyes. Then she was staring. So, we were both staring. Her stare was two sharp blue shapes. She was staring me down, it appears. Or it appeared that way to me at that time, perhaps. Her stare was just like a mask. I am telling it to you that way for a reason. This is the reason. It was blank, the way a mask might be blank. Next I know, I am saying, "I can not stand it any more," just as if she knew what I was talking about. It just came out that way. I did not know I was going to say it, before I did say it.

Miss Lula answered me at that time. Her answer was this. She said, "Are you the only one who can't stand some things around here?" Then she just kept on watching me, whiles the sun shined in through her night dress and so on. Some items about her flipped through my mind at that time, like a deck of cards. The ace card of it was her operation, and so on. I have told you. "You know whut this is, you know," she said. "A psychological rape," she said.

I did not answer her back. I did not have any thing to say about it. I went in to the water closet, which, it was off the kitchen. Miss Lula was only a yard or so off, but I sat down. I put my face in to my hands. Then I bawled, rather like Master Joshua Oleander. Then, I had a stomach pain. Then, I had a diarrhea. It made a blast sound, or a blat sound, or a similar sound. Miss Lula heard that sound. I was sure of it, so, it was embarrassing. So, I was embarrassed.

Chapter 26

Why time is interesting.

When I moved in to Miss Lula's house, I slept on a divan she had in her parlor. Day times, I worked at Kool Kone. I am not going to talk about all of that in this particular chapter. I am going on a side track.

"Time is interesting," my friend Mister Louis Morse said, one time. We were living in Perry Street at that time, so, he was not Assistant Professor. He was only Mister. When he said an item such as "Time is interesting," or, "Space is interesting," or some thing else is interesting, then I all ways knew I ought say, "Why is time interesting," or, "Why is space interesting," or why is one of those other items interesting. Then, I might say what I ought say.

This time, I just said, "It is boring, sometimes."

Mister Louis Morse raised his eye brow. He said, "That's unphilosophical."

"All right," I said.

"When you find time boring, you are that which is boring," he said.

I said, "What if I am the prisoner of Zenda."

Mister Louis Morse could have said, "What if you are," or, "What do you mean," or some other question. One of those sayings is what I planned him to say, of course. If he said one of those sayings, I might have whipped by him my clever riposte, so he did not say one of them, how ever. It is the same reason that I did not ask him why is time interesting, of course.

In stead of one of those sayings, he said, "I detest counterfactuals."

"The prisoner of Zenda is an interesting person," I said.

"Who is never bored by time," he said.

"Why not?" I said.

At that time, I was in the trap. Mister Louis Morse all most never went in to my traps, but I all most all ways went in to his traps. He said, "Attendez. Why is the prisoner of Zenda fascinated by time? Because he is surrounded by it. Ensconced in it. Immured in it. In other words, a prisoner of it. It is the only object available to his contemplation."

I said, "It is not."

Mister Louis Morse hummed like this. "Hmmm." He drummed his fingers on the counter, for we were in our kitchen, where that counter is. It is not for counting, of course. It is marble. Assistant Professor Louis Morse did not want me to tell him an other object for the prisoner of Zenda to contemplate. He wanted to tell me why time is interesting. Fair is fair, how ever. "All right, what?" he nastily said. How he said some thing nastily was, he tossed his head, whiles rolling his eyes, whiles running his fingers in the Brillo™ hair, which, one horn of it came out over each of his ears. I have mentioned it.

"He may contemplate his ways and means," I said.

"Of what? Escape, I suppose," he said.

"Yes, sir," I said.

Mister Louis Morse smiled. It was a dreamy smile, with bloody eyes that did not look quite at you. They tried, but their look landed some where on your left, or some where on your right. That is the way his eyes looked when it was two in the morning.

We often carried on this way at such a time, when he happened to come home from his tour of the docks with out a young man to while his time away. He would be sitting on the bar stool with his tie untied and his vest unbuttoned, sipping his martini. I would be standing near by, before I quaffed my glass of Hershey's chocolate flavored milk, or after I quaffed my glass. I do not sip my chocolate milk. I all at once quaff it.

"Aren't we practical," said Assistant Professor Louis Morse. "That's boring," he said.

"It is not," I said.

"Oh," said Mister Louis Morse with his eye brows high up. "Now that's just argumentative," he said.

"He may contemplate his past loves," I said.

"Hmmm," Mister Louis Morse said, swaying.

"He may contemplate his errors and his sins," I said.

"Piff," said Mister Louis Morse. "What's the use of that?" he said.

"It will pass the time," I said.

"Boring," Assistant Professor Louis Morse said. "Here is what we do to pass the time," he said.

I did not understand him, so I said, "I do not understand you."

Mister Louis Morse said "Listen, I'll be Socrates. You be someone with some other name. Wittgenstein. "

"All right," I said.

"What are we doing?" he said.

I said, "Whut?"

"What are we doing?" he said an other time.

"We are pretending that we are philosophers," I said.

Mister Louis Morse swiftly looked at me. "Not exactly. Or, not entirely," he said.

"What else are we doing," I said.

"Playing a game, of course," said Assistant Professor Louis Morse.

I said, "Uh huh."

"Indeed," he said.

"What kind of game," I said.

"Doctor Wittgenstein, a game is a means of passing the time," said Mister Louis Morse.

"It passes any way," I said.

Assistant Professor Louis Morse rang his coin change device. It was on his belt, where it was usually, of course. He said, "Two bits."

I said, "Why?"

He said, "Figure it out."

"Why is time interesting?" I said.

Assistant Professor Louis Morse only said, "You had your chance." Then, he went to his bed. So, there are two or three pass times for you.

Chapter 27

Why is doody interesting.

In my recently passed Chapter 26, I have rather craftily prepared to tell you this. "If you do say so yourself." My cell mate, Mister Maxwell Mentiroso, has made that remark to me just now. I am saying it my self in deed, so, he is correct. This is what I am prepared to tell you. An other pass time is the doody game. Master Joshua Oleander, who is the child of Mister Dax Oleander, as well as the child of Miss Lula, taught it to me. That child is not Master Joshua Oleander at this time. He is Mister Joshua Oleander at this time, so, which of them taught it to me. I do not know.

May be that you do not concern your self with such Conundra of Reference. It is the name of a chapter in the dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of Assistant Professor Louis Morse. I concern my self, how ever. The reason is, I read that dissertation. The reason is, I had to read it. The reason is, I typed it. The reason is, I had to type it. The reason is, I was in debt to Assistant Professor Louis Morse, at that time, for my rental arrears in Perry Street. I was only a cashier in Macy's department store at that time. My pay was only one dollar and twenty five cents per hour. It was a time when Assistant Professor Louis Morse was only Mister Louis Morse, in a matter of fact. I suppose that I was only indebted to Mister Louis Morse, not to Assistant Professor Louis Morse, in that case. I can not unpick such conundra from my thoughts at this time, much as I might wish to. They stick to them like cob webs. My prior sentence has in it some ambiguous pronouns, as you can easily see. It is not a conundrum, how ever. It is just a poor sentence.

Here is how Master Joshua Oleander played the doody game with me. Say you are eating your break fast in the kitchen. Master Joshua Oleander will be sitting by you. He will scoop up some food, which, it is invisible food, from a bowl. Often that bowl is invisible as well. At times, his spoon will be invisible, but, some times, it is a visible one, if one of those visible spoons happens to be lying around some where.

He will say, "Whut am I eating?" He all ways said "Whut," the same way I do. The reason is, his mother all ways said "Whut," the same way I do, of course.

Then I will say, "How ought I know?"

Then he will say, "Can't you see it?" He will say it like this. Caynt Yew Say Et? That is his accent, for this reason. It is his mother's accent.

One time, I said it to Assistant Professor Louis Morse. "He has his mother's accent," I said, and he rang his coin changing device.

"Nonsense," he said. "How can a boy have his mother's accent?" It was a jest, I believe. If you do not follow the jest, you must take this philosophy course. Philosophy of Mind 101. On the other hand, may be that it was not a jest. In that case, it was nonsense.

I am going back to Master or Master Joshua Oleander's doody game at this time. After he says, "Can't you see it?" then, I will say, "Well, of course I can not."

Then he will say, "Why not?" like this. Wha Nayot?

I will say, "I have no idea," at that time, only I will say it Ah Dee. Then, "Can you see it?" next I will say.

"Well of course I can," he will say at that time. He will say it Cayan, of course.

"Well then, whut is it?" I will say.

That is when he says, "Doody."

Then Miss Lula will say, "Don't talk that way," if she is in that kitchen with us. If she is not in that kitchen, then I will twist my face to make him laugh. Then, he will laugh, of course. Then I will cry out, "No!" Then, he will laugh some more.

Some times, he will drink from his invisible glass. "Whut am I drinking?" he will say.

I will say, "Whut?" then.

"Peepee," he will say. Then, I will twist my face an other time. Then, he will laugh an other time.

"Whut am I eating now?" he will say then.

"I can not see it," I will say.

He will reach me up to hold my ear, then. I will lean it down where he can get it. Then he whispers in to it, "Boogers."

"Oh no!" I will cry. It causes him to laugh some more, of course.

That is how he played that doody game with me. It is two separate and distinct thats.

Chapter 28

Miss Lula considers her option.

"Will you come somewhere with me tomorrow night?" Miss Lula Smith said, one Sunday. It was the morning of that day. It was about ten fifteen of that morning, give a minute one way or the other. The day was the fourth day in July. So, it was the Fourth of July. I was sulking on Miss Lula's divan in her parlor, hearing songs of a record Rumors go by on her record player. I was seeing tall ships on her cable TV with the sound off. I was not skulking. I was sulking. You are skulking if they can not find you. You are sulking if they do not want to find you. Miss Lula did not want to find me. I knew it from the way that she held her hands to her hips, as she leaned the upper side of her body away from me. It said, with her body language, "I got no choice about this if I want someone to go with." Here is the reason it said it with body language. The second it is different than the first it. Here is the reason. It was a body.

I did not answer her. The reason is, I was sulking.

"I got no choice if I want someone to go with," she said. See?

"Huh," I said.

"Good golly, Willy Wilson," said Miss Lula.

"Good golly Miss Molly," I said back to her.

"Sass me not," she said. "I am nice to you," she said.

"You ain't," I said.

She shook her head. She had her hair in a pony tail that day. So, she shook her pony tail. She had on her white dish washing apron, with pink threads around the edges of it, but I have no reason to tell you about that apron. For an example, it did not shake.

"If everybody was as nice to everybody as you would like them to be, now, that would be a nice world, wouldn't it?" she said with her low, ironical, growl tone. It is one of several tones she has.

When she said that, my mind blew up. I stood off the divan. "I ain't every body," I said. "I ain't every body," I said an other time. I kept saying it a while, louder each time.

Miss Lula stepped back. "Hold on, cowboy," she said.

Then I sat down where I could put my face in to my hands. My face was skulking at that time.

Miss Lula sat next to me. "I don't want to go by my self tonight."

"Get one of your boy friends," I said. I could feel her stiffen up. "I did not mean it," I said.

"Didn't mean whut?" she said. I held my peace. "Don't answer," she said, but I was not answering all ready. I took out my face. I wiped my nose with my fingers. I wiped my fingers on my dungarees. Miss Lula looked in my eyes. "I know you ain't everybody," she said.

I said, "All right." Then I said, "Who am I, then?"

"I'm considering," she said.

Chapter 29

She considers her other option.

Monday night, we walked to the night club in the Small Mall, which, it was the Blue Parrot night club. That night club had a visiting jazz band. That band had a horn player with a bent horn and a goatee. People will hold on to their bent broken utensils, it seems. They will hold on to their goatees as well, it seems. It is a jest. The jazz music was amplified, so, it was loud. The air was air conditioned, so, it was cold. I was in my short sleeve shirt, so I was cold as well. The air was smoky from cigarettes. Miss Lula had own cigarette, smoking away on her ash tray. I do not like cigarettes. I have told you.

Comes a recess, and Miss Lula says, "Her."

"Whut," says I.

"Her," says she.

"Who?" says I.

"Cinnamon," says she. "Can't you see?" She says it Cayn't Yew Say? of course.

"I am looking in your direction," I say. "I am not looking in her direction," I say.

Miss Lula popped her eye brows and twirled her eyes.

"Whut is she up to?" says I.

"Why don't you twist your damn head once and see?" says she.

"I am stiff necked," I say, but that was not my reason.

"That's the truth," says Miss Lula.

"Whut is?" says I.

"She slickin' on him just like a ho' on a greased pole," says Miss Lula. I twisted my damn head to see, at that time. Miss Cinnamon Askew was on the band stand, with her left bare arm around the shoulders of that horn musician. Her right bare arm was not around that fellow, how ever. It was playing with his hat, or her hand on that arm was playing with that hat. He was a smiling fellow with his goatee and so on. His shirt was a Hawaiian shirt, but was it ever in Hawaii. I do not know. His hat was a beret. A beret is French, but was he ever in that land, or was his hat ever in that land. I do not know those items either.

"Bitch is drunk," says Miss Lula.

"They just talking," says I.

"Hah," says Miss Lula. The horn player blew spit from his horn. Miss Cinnamon Askew laughed.

"Whut do you care?" I say.

"Whut you care whut I care?" says Miss Lula. Then she stands up. "Come on," she says.

Then we were in the alley between two dumpsters. Those dumpsters were between the Blue Parrot and the Kool Kone. Miss Lula stepped one foot out its high heel shoe on to the concrete wall. She did not talk, only held one elbow on one of her arms with the hand on the other one of her arms, while the hand on the held elbow arm took her cigarette in her mouth, then out of it, a number of times. Her held elbow arm was her left arm. Miss Lula had a long billowy yellow skirt on her waist. Heat from the back end of the air conditioning was blowing in that alley, so her skirt was billowing, so I saw her legs. She was wearing some dark green thin little shirt tied up with bow strings on her

shoulders. It exposed her arm pit hair. I liked that hair. You all ready know. In the dark, that hair is dark. In the light, it is light. It was dark. So, it was dark. It is my particular fetish. Am I the only one with that fetish. I do not know, of course. If it is your fetish, will you confess to it. You may confess it, if you are writing a confession. I am writing one. So, I am confessing it.

"Now whut are you looking at?" Miss Lula said, so I looked away from her arm pit hair. I looked at the dumpster next to me. It had a pile of cartons in a heap. They said Vanilla, or Strawberry Vanilla, or Rocky Road, or some other flavor. I am most in favor of chocolate flavor. It is my favorite one. "You are a strange boy," Miss Lula said.

"I am twenty five years old," I said.

"And whut follows from that?" she said. It is a saying of Assistant Professor Louis Morse when he disputes with a fellow. "And what follows from that?" He blinks when he tells it. Miss Lula told it in her Amazon way of speaking, with out blinks, instead of in his New Jersey way, with blinks. So, it was funny. So, I laughed.

Miss Lula threw down her cigarette. She blew a long cone or tunnel of grey smoke. I am spelling Grey that way. It is more smoky. "Everything's a jest, huh?" she said. She was not blinking.

I said, "I was laughing at some thing."

She said, "Between her and you, the whole world is laughing."

"Me and who," I said.

"That Cinnamon," she said.

"She was not laughing at you," I said.

"Uh huh," Miss Lula said.

"She was doing that other fellow," I said.

"She like to," said Miss Lula. Then she shook her head, so, she shook her pony tail. So, it shook. A red velvet ribbon was tied on it. "I want something," she said.

I said, "Whut."

"A daiquiri with a strawberry in it," she said. "And a paper gold flag on a toothpick in the strawberry," she said.

"Will I bring you one," I said.

"Are you a lick spittle, or whut," she said.

My eyes felt hot at that time. "I will lick yours if you want me to," I said.

Miss Lula made her eyes twirl. Then she slapped, or tapped, her self on her fore head. She said, "Don't be a ass." Sic. It is in Latin. Then she said, "I don't want no damn drink."

"Then whut," I said after a while. I had a pause between her saying "I don't want no damn drink," and my saying "Then whut". It was to this purpose. So I would not weep.

She said in her lower voice, "Dax is coming here." That voice is lower than her higher voice. She was looking down at the ground. It had only cigarette butts, as well as old spittle, which, no one had licked it, of course. It was disgusting. That whole alley was disgusting me at that time. I thought I should vomit.

"Why," I said.

She said, "I ast him to."

I said, "Why?" an other time.

She looked at me. "I'm thinking to have it out," she said.

This is what I understood. She did not mean, "I'm thinking to have it out with Dax". She meant, "I'm thinking to have my cervix that is fixing to kill me out". She and Dax were all had out quite a long time ago. I knew it for this reason. She had told me.

"Good," I said. It was the wrong word to say, of course.

She said, "That's the wrong word to say."

So I said, "I apologize."

"How'd you like it," she said.

"I would not," I said.

"Cutting you all up," she said.

I said, "You are right."

"Messing with your orgasms," she said.

I didn't say any thing to that.

She said, "Don't it?"

"I do not know," I said.

"You a scholar," she said.

"Not that kind," I said.

"You ain't much use then, are you," she said.

"I never heard that about orgasms," I said. My heart throbbed, for this reason. I was talking with Miss Lula about orgasms.

Then she said, "You no expert."

"Well, fuck me Jesus," I said.

She leaned towards me and she touched my hand. "That's not whut I meant," she said.

I sighed once. I did not necessarily believe her, when she said "That's not whut I meant," for she has a quick tongue. "Why you telling me about orgasms?" I said.

She said, "Who else I gonna to tell?"

"Whut ought I say?" I said.

Miss Lula rolled her shoulders.

"You know whut I think," I said. I thought she ought have it out in deed. She knew it for this reason. I had all ready told her.

"That's your opinion," she said.

I said, "Do you mean it is my opinion, that you know whut I think? Or do you mean that, whut I think is my opinion?"

Miss Lula shook her head. "Don't give me such Louis shit," she said. I did not answer her. She said, "It ain't a game."

"I do not know whut you want," I said. It is curious to say it, but I had my reflex going at that time. I am telling you for this reason. It is curious.

Miss Lula rolled her shoulders an other time.

I said, "You are like that fellow on the edge of the cliff. Should you stay, or should you hop off."

"Is this a story?" said Miss Lula.

"It is a movie," I said.

"Don't tell more of it," she said.

"All right," I said.

"I know whut you think," she said.

"You do," I said.

"Yes I do, sir," she said.

I said, "All right."

"Are you happy now?" she said.

I said, "No."

She smiled. "Why not?" she said.

"Because you will not hop off," I said.

"I might," she said.

I said, "Might you?"

"Yes sir," she said.

I said, "All right." Then we went back in side.

Chapter 30

I go off.

We stood at the bar, so Miss Lula could order her drink. It was not a daiquiri with a straw berry in it. I do not know what it was. I can not tell one drink from an other, except, I know a wine drink from a beer drink, or from a mixed drink, or from some other drinks. I have not drunk a mixed drink. I have drunk some wine. I have drunk some beer. Plain water tastes better for me. It will not make you glad the way drinks do, but it will not give you a head ache. Drinks, such as wine and so on, give me them. You can not read your book if you have a head ache. Hershey's Chocolate Syrup in milk does not give me a head ache. I have a head ache when I do not quaff my Hershey's Chocolate Syrup in milk. I need some every day. My throat feels good when I swallow it.

Other men with other women were standing at that bar. At that time, I watched those men talking to those women. Some of them put their arm on a woman's neck. If some man put his arm on my own particular neck, then I would pull away. I am not a woman, of course. I might not pull away if a woman did that to my neck, but I have not been put to the test. Those women did not pull away from those men. They smiled at those men, or they brushed their hair back with their hands, or they made some other compliant gesture. So, I wondered. Might I put my arm on the neck of Miss Lula. I did not dare, how ever. The reason is, she was talking to a man who had his arm around her neck.

That man was chatting her up. I might have heard his sweet no things if the music had been quieter, but I could not hear his sweet no things. That fellow was acting as

though that I was not there. He may have thought I was not with Miss Lula. He may have thought no thing about me at all. He was a tall fellow. Tall fellows will do short fellows that way. I am a short fellow, of course. This fellow was wearing a shirt with red decorations like guitar curly cues on it. It was a silver shirt, with tassels running down its sleeves. He had a tall white hat on his head. Where else would he have it, of course. This fellow had grey eyes, with thick brown eye brows on them. He had a sharp, long nose with a moustache under it. That moustache had waxed curls on its tips. He had long, thick, brown nose hairs hanging out of that nose. Those nose hairs mingled with that moustache. When I was a small child I was under this impression. A moustache is no thing but long nose hairs. I was under several other impressions, such as, the world is the in side of a bowl. You can see that bowl. Just look up, there it is. One day, I told my mother about my bowl impression at the Atlantic and Pacific Tea Company market in Culptown, whiles we waited to grind her coffee. I have said *we*, but I did not grind any. My mother did not believe my thought about the world. An other impression I had was, the space between my mother's breasts had a deep, bloody cleft in it, like a gill of a fish. She had a skin condition, is the reason. I did not discuss that particular impression with her. It made me nervous. I am not nervous when I see long nose hairs. It is more as though I am sea sick, all though, I am all most never in a boat at those times. I am all most never in a boat at all, but I have been in a wherry. I do not have a moustache. I do not have long nose hairs, either.

When I saw that fellow put his arm on the neck of my beloved person, Miss Lula, I thought, "He is rude." Miss Lula was thinking some other thought. Here is how I knew it. She was shining as bright as the lime lights at the edge of the stage. Her teeth shined.

Her hair shined. Her eyes shined. She was shining all over. I sneaked off, or I stormed off. I did not storm off. Here is my reason. I do not talk that way. So, I sneaked off.

Chapter 31

Mister Dax Oleander

I walked back to Miss Lula's house, in which the lights were on. The front door was open, for we did not lock it as a matter of course. Miss Lula was in the parlor. She was sitting down on her divan, which is where I slept. She stared at me with tight lips. That means, her lips were tight while she stared at me. It does not mean she stared at me with her lips.

"How did you beat me," I said.

She said, "I got a ride."

"From that cow boy?" I said.

She said, "He the one."

"Why you looking at me that way?" I said.

"How'm I looking at you?" she said.

I said, "You know how."

She said, "Did you think I was going off with him?"

"How do I know," I said.

"I had to get Master Joshua Oleander," she said.

I said, "Uh huh."

She said, "You think I'd leave him in the Crow Hollow?" Where she took Master Joshua Oleander, when we went some where he could not go, was to Isabel's house, which was in Crow Hollow, of course.

"How do I know?" I said.

"How many chillun live in this house, anyway?" said Miss Lula. I kept my silence. "Don't walk off that way again," she said.

I said, "All right."

"One child's enough," she said. She stood off the divan. "Now I'm going," she said.

That made fear shoot in to my blood. I said, "Where?"

Miss Lula put the backs of her hands on to her hips. She leaned forward with her under lip rolled out at me. "Where you think?" she said.

I did not answer.

"I ain't married to you," she said.

Still I would not answer. Miss Lula looked at me a while. She tapped one of her feet several times. Which foot it was, I do not recall. She sighed once. Then, she walked out the door. Her car started. I went to Master Joshua Oleander's room to see if he was there. He was not there, so I sighed my self, then. It was relief. The reason is the final proposition in a short sequence of such propositions that constitute an argument. The reason I have mentioned is the conclusion of the argument. I am not going to give you the argument. I am not going to give you the conclusion. You can fill them in your self, if you want to. My heart was pounding. I went to the parlor where the divan was. I lay on it.

Next I knew, some one was saying, "Who the hell you are?" I am under lining that word You. Moon light was in the room. An other tall fellow was standing over me. I suppose it was my day for the tall kind. This one was dressed in gypsy clothing, or hippie clothing. I suppose they were hippie clothing. We do not have a great many

gypsies in the land of Amazon. We do not have hippies, either. We still had some in the year 1976, how ever, which, it was the year at that time.

This fellow was the spirit and image of Master Joshua Oleander. He had the same flax blond hair. It was to his shoulders. It was flat sheets of hair, with dark lights in it. Dark Lights is my opposite of High Lights. May be that you can picture it. This fellow had the same two rows of square white teeth, as well as the same squared off jaw, as Master Joshua Oleander. So he must be Mister Dax Oleander, who, he was a hippie, as I had heard it, so, he would wear the hippie clothing. It was my deduction. He had a long beard and moustaches, with out waxed tips, how ever. Master Joshua Oleander does not have any of those items, of course.

"Where's Lucy?" the fellow said. He said it this way. Wheyz Lucy?

I sat up and I scratched my hair. It is a way of speaking. My hair does not feel scratches. I did not scratch it. My scalp feels scratches. I scratched it.

"Are you Mister Dax?" I said.

He said, "I asked you first." I Ast Yew Fuyst is the way he said those particular words.

"Crow Hollow," I said.

"At Isabel," he said.

"Yes sir," I said.

He said, "That one's a pistol."

I said, "Huh," not to commit to an opinion.

"When she be back?" he said.

I rolled my shoulders. Then I rubbed my eyes.

"Whut's to eat around here?" the fellow said.

"Help your self," I said. I pointed at the kitchen.

That fellow did not go in there. He went to the front door and bellowed, "Come on!" to several people.

How I know there were several is, they came in then. A fellow was one who was no thing but skin on bones. He was a walking cadaver, as he appeared to me. He was medium sized in his other dimensions. An other fellow was one who was a short one. He was even more short than I am. Then, there were three women. One was tall. One was medium. One was short. I thought that all three were pretty, as far as moon light will tell. The short fellow was rather piggish. His nose was a round, blunt one. His cheeks were round. His lips puckered at all times, as to kiss you. His eyes were black spots in little pudgy eye holes. He was pleasant to look at. The reason is, he was that ugly. Moon light did not tell what color hair those people had. If one had been blond, then it might have, but they all had darker hair. The hair on the tall woman was fashioned as a pixie's might be. The medium sized woman had medium sized hair. The shortest woman had the longest hair. She was wearing a head band. They all had beads and bangles and baubles that glanced the silver moon light now and then. They all wore white tops with billowy sleeves. It was hippie clothing, so they were were all hippies, of course. How you knew one, was a matter of that clothing, of course. You did not go up to a person who, he or she was dressed that way, then you ask, "Are you a hippie?" or, "Do you spend your day imbibing your various drugs?" Now, if you saw a person who was dressed that way whiles he or she was drawing on a blunt, and you smelled its sweet smoke, or two of them were mating in a public place, such as the tree park we have near

Kleagle Memorial Parkway, or some other public place, why, then you knew with out asking, or even looking their clothes over. You could tell it then. These people were not doing those particular motions. So, I looked their clothes over. I knew it, then.

The fellow who was Mister Dax Oleander said to me, "My worthy constituents."
He said it Wuythee.

I said, "Hello. Food is in there," and I pointed at it. Rather, I pointed at the kitchen, where the food was, of course. Then I said, "Leave us some," for I feared they might empty the pantries. "Tight money," I said to Mister Dax Oleander.

He said, "Your worries are over."

I thought, "Well that is good news." So I said, "Well that is good news." I do not all ways think my words first. More of the time, they come out exactly when I think them.

"No news is bad news. My news is good news," he said.

"Whut do you mean?" I said, but he did not answer me. He was off to the kitchen when I said it.

Chapter 32

Mister Dax Oleander asks me a question.

Those other people and Mister Dax Oleander raised tents in the back yard. Those tents were out of their van, which was a Volkswagen van. It was one of those acid trip vans. You tell them by their glorious colors. I saw it through the parlor window next to my sleeping divan, when I woke next morning. It was not mine, of course. It was not sleeping, of course.

I am saying "of course" for this reason. Those facts go with out saying. I know it. I say "of course" so you will know I know it. Other wise you may think, "He is slow." You may not believe what I am telling you, then. If I designed that you do not believe me, then it would not be a confession, even if it was true. It would be a lie, then. It is an other conundrum. I will tell it to Assistant Professor Louis Morse, if I run in to him.

When I had my knees on the divan, as well as my elbows on the back of it so that I might look through the parlor window, then Miss Lula came out of her bed room, so I looked at her. She was dressed in a quilted robe which, I had never seen it. I liked to see through her dressing gown. I did not like that I did not see through that particular robe at that time. It is not a lie. It is a confession.

"Will you brew two or three pots of pasta sauce?" Miss Lula said.

I said, "All right," for this reason. I know how to brew those pots. Assistant Professor Henry Shine showed me when we were in Perry Street, on the island of Manhattan. It is an art. How I know is, Assistant Professor Henry Shine said "It is an art" at that time.

"Make enough," said Miss Lula.

I said, "All right," an other time.

She masked her face with her hands. She groaned once. "They taking him off," she said.

I said, "Huh."

The kitchen screen door banged. In came Mister Dax Oleander, bare down to his waist. After his beard, he did not have a hair on his body, as far as I could see. "I want spaghetti tonight," he said. Then he went off to the water closet.

Miss Lula raked her face skin as she drew her hands down. You could see traces her finger nails made. "I know it," she said, all though he was not listening. He was not in the room, so, how could he.

I cooked sauce all day. Most of it, I could hear Mister Dax Oleander talking in the parlor. The people who were with him came in the kitchen a few times, to get a jar of milk, or to get some thing else. They did not speak to me, all though the short woman smiled at me when she would be in there. "That smells so nice," she would say, to which I might nod, or look at the pot and stir it faster. If I had much sense, I had given her a smile back, but I did not, so I did not. After a while, she would leave me alone, then.

Mister Dax Oleander had a lot to say. I heard a good deal of it. For example, he told his listening public how he was anointed. "The shaman of the Chikataw stood over me and he poured his waters upon me. It was in the God Awful Hills, back of the Misery River, in a stream neath a waterfall that spills in front of a cave, where the bones of their war chief, the sachem Likeeyup, have been hidden away from us white men two hundred years."

"Was they blessings on that water?" some one said.

"It was not any ordinary water, hear me," Mister Dax Oleander said then. Then he said, "It had oils in it that seep out of Likeeyup's uncorrupted body. The shaman of the Chikataw, his name is Bees Love Me, comes and gets it on the midnight of an empty moon. He sucks it in to a straw from the nostrils of Likeeyup, and he spits that oil in to a leather bag that has oyster shells sewn onto it, from when this land of Amazon was at the bottom of the Atlantic Ocean. That was totally long ago, man. Five thousand years, at least."

"Wow," said some one else.

"Those shells, they all over the banks of the Misery. They everywhere, man," Mister Dax Oleander said.

"Did you get a blessing then?" the first one said.

" 'Blessings on him,' that shaman cried," said Mister Dax Oleander. Then he said " 'May his winds of changes shift.' " Those words sounded familiar, but I could not place them. Next, Mister Dax Oleander said, "He gave me two names – a name for you to hear, and a name only for me to hear."

"Hoo," some one said.

Some one else said, "Whut was the names?"

The first one said, "He can't say both those names, man. He can only say the one."

The other one said, "Which one?"

The first one said, "The one he can say, man."

The other one said, "What's those names, Dax?"

Mister Dax Oleander said, "You ready?"

"Yes sir," one of those fellows said.

"It's 'He Who Came To Me Goes Forth To Many.' " said Mister Dax Oleander. "I ain't tell 't other," he said.

"How comes it he gave you those names, Dax?" the first one said.

Mister Dax Oleander said, "Say, 'How comes it he gave you those names, O He Who Came To Me Goes Forth To Many?' Say it that way."

"All right," that fellow said.

"Go on, then," said Mister Dax Oleander.

So the fellow said, "How comes it he gave you those names, O He Who Came To Me Goes Forth To Many?"

Mister Dax Oleander said, "I ain't telling." Next, he comes in to the kitchen where I am. He stands over me whiles I stir my pan. It is a pan of clarified butter. Chopped onions with chopped garlic are in it. It is the way Assistant Professor Henry Shine showed me. You put the tomatoes after. "I eat a bear whole," says Mister Dax Oleander.

I just keep stirring. I have conceived a dislike for him. So, I am not talking to him if I can help it.

He leans all the way over me to look. He is so tall that he can do it. I smell his sweat, as well as grass. It is not green grass from the lawn. It is contra banned hippie grass. "Where's my sauce?" he says. He says it Wheyz Ma Sauce?

I say, "Here."

He shoves one of my shoulders with one of his palms in a friendly manner. It is my left shoulder. I do not know if it his left palm. I could not tell, for this reason. Both his palms are behind my back, but my eyes point the other way.

"I want tomatoes," he says.

I say, "You put them after."

Mister Dax Oleander stands still a while, whiles I stir. He takes a long breath up his nose. I did not see it. I heard it. You can hear if a breath is going that way. I might have seen it by his closed lips, if I had looked, of course. But I did not look, so I did not see it.

Then Mister Dax Oleander says, "Well the butter is fresh." I keep with my stirring, so he says, "You ain't talk much, do you."

"No," I say.

"Hah. You slick," he says. I ain't, though.

So, I say, "I ain't, though," of course.

"Yes you are," he says.

"No I ain't," I tell him.

"Let me ax you something," he says. I keep on stirring. He says, "You getting some?" My blood flash freezes. I think, Huh, but I keep on stirring.

Mister Dax Oleander barks like a dog once. Then, he barks an other time as he walks out of that kitchen. Then, he howls as a dog might howl at the full moon. A dog will not howl at an empty moon, of course. "Hey Lucy!" he shouts. Then he shouts, "I ast Willy, is he getting some!" Then, he barks some more.

I cooked sauce all day. All so, Mister Dax Oleander barked all day, every once in a while.

Chapter 33

A game of pabulum.

We ate supper in the kitchen. There were nine of us, so the table was crowded. I ate off a plate that I kept on my lap. I could not fit at the table with the rest of them. I had my chair behind Miss Lula's one. She had her long, dark gold hair in long, slow curls, one on each side of the back of her neck. Every once in a while Mister Dax Oleander gave me a wink. Then he'd say, "Don't spill it," or "Watch your manners," or some thing else that was amusing. I knew it was amusing as follows. When he gave you one of those amusements, he held his belly and he laughed. Or, if it was more funny than usual, then he barked.

Mister Dax Oleander all so barked at Master Joshua Oleander, to make him laugh too, which Master Joshua Oleander did, of course. Master Joshua Oleander was high up on his chair next to Miss Lula. Here is the reason. Pillows. Mister Dax Oleander would yip several times. Then Master Joshua Oleander would giggle, or gurgle, or issue some other good humored sound. So Mister Dax Oleander would do more yips, and Master Joshua Oleander would reprise his end of it. The next time, Mister Dax Oleander would bark loudly with a growl, followed by more yips, so Master Joshua Oleander would scream joyously and slam his fists on the tray that was attached to his high chair. Then his plastic little plate would fly off the tray, so his pabulum would fly off as well. There was pabulum every where, after a while.

When this had been going on a time, Miss Lula said, "Dax."

Mister Dax Oleander barked. "Whut," he said.

"How will he sleep?" Miss Lula said.

Mister Dax Oleander used his table spoon as a flipper. It flipped some pabulum at Master Joshua Oleander. That pabulum landed on Master Joshua Oleander's bib. Master Joshua Oleander wiped at it, marveling.

"He will," Mister Dax Oleander said.

The tall woman, Miss Midget by name, said, "I'll sing him a lullaby." I did not get her second name, or, I did not get her first name.

"That's it," Mister Dax Oleander said. "Thassit" is the phonetics of it.

Miss Lula raked her cheeks with her finger nails. She had been raking them all day. I knew it for this reason. She came in to the kitchen now and then. Then I watched her raking them.

"Don't you worry about Josh," Mister Dax Oleander said. "Worry about you," he said.

Miss Lula reached in to her fake leather Louis Vuitton bag for her cigarette and her cigarette lighter. "I can worry about two things at once, can't I?" she said. Her cigarette whipped up and down in her lips, which, those lips were clamped on that cigarette whiles she said it.

Miss Midget said, "Dearie, you shouldn't."

Miss Lula said, "I want to."

"I'm going to be the very best nanny," Miss Midget said.

Miss Lula moved her cigarette to her other hand. She put her first hand on the arm of Miss Midget. "Oh, will you?" she said. This is how she said it. As if she wanted to know the answer.

"I will too," the short woman said. She was across the table from Miss Lula, as well as from me. She was speaking to Miss Lula, but her eyes were on me. In those days, women who had eyes on me were not woman my eyes were on. It is a manner of speaking, of course. My eyes were not on any woman, of course. It would hurt. The medium sized woman was all so at the table, as well as the pig looking fellow, as well as the cadaver looking fellow. They did not speak much. They were eating the pasta. After that, they were eating the chocolate cake that I made from a mixture in a card board box. The reason I made it is this. They will all ways eat it.

Chapter 34

Dead can't wait.

When the supper was over, then Miss Lula looked at the people with their empty plates. Brown beer bottles with wet used cigarettes in them stood in front of the three fellows, as well as in front of the three women. I am not counting my self with the fellows, for this reason. I was not with those fellows. There was pabulum, as well as other used cigarettes, in Miss Lula's iridescent sea shell ash tray. Those particular used cigarettes were dry. Smears of tomato sauce were on a variety of used up plates of spaghetti, as well as on the bib of Master Joshua Oleander, as well as on his face's cheeks. "The last supper," Miss Lula said.

Mister Dax Oleander said, "Phshaw."

Miss Lula cast him a curled lips and hooded eyes look, such as a wife, or a former wife, gives her husband, or her former husband, when she is disgusted with him. Mister Dax Oleander spread his palms on the table, whiles leaning towards Miss Lula, whiles wagging his head, whiles raising his eye brows. It was a motion a husband, or a former husband, might make to defy his wife, or his former wife, when she is disgusted with him. I had not been a husband at that time. I have not been one at this time, either. However, it was my impression.

"Thank 'ee for what you're doing," Miss Lula said to her former husband at that time, with her eye lids half down.

"You welcome for it," Mister Dax Oleander said. He barked once. Then he slapped his knees. Then he laughed.

Miss Lula said, "Jeez Louise."

"You have no worries," said Mister Dax Oleander. "I promise," he said.

"Speaking for who?" Miss Lula said.

"For myself," he said. He wiggled his eye brows. Then he tapped his imaginary cigar as Groucho Marx does it. Assistant Professor Henry Shine all so often does it. It may be that Assistant Professor Henry Shine's imaginary cigar reminded Miss Lula of Mister Dax Oleander's imaginary cigar, and that is why she took a shine to him. It has layers of meaning. I am telling you for your reading pleasure.

"He Who Came," Miss Lula said.

"That's right," Mister Dax Oleander said.

Miss Lula said, "Oh brother."

Mister Dax Oleander folded his arms. "You can believe it or not," he said.

Miss Lula said, "Tell you whut." She patted her former husband on his cheek.

"I'll suspend my judgments."

The cadaver looking fellow spoke up. He was leaning back far in his chair all most to tip it over. He was attempting to light a stove match on his shoe heel that way. "Time to book?" he said. The fire on that match flared at that time, so he lit his cigarette with it. He made an inquiring look at his fellow travelers.

The short woman said, "Awww."

"Got to," the cadaver fellow said.

Miss Lula was looking at Master Joshua Oleander. "Why you got to?" she said.

The medium sized woman spoke up. She said, "The Dead's in Charleston this Thursday." That medium woman had the greenest eyes that I have ever seen, so I liked to look at them.

Miss Lula looked her way. "So whut?" she said.

The pig looking fellow spoke up and said, "We be late."

Miss Lula said "So whut?" an other time.

The pig looking fellow looked at Mister Dax Oleander. "Well, we don't want to be late, do we?" he said.

"Dead can't wait," Mister Dax Oleander said. He barked once. Then he slapped his knee.

Miss Lula stood over the high chair and she lifted her child from it. She wiped pabulum off his mouth. "Stay 'til morning," she said.

Master Joshua Oleander said "Stay," then.

"Let's stay," the short woman said.

Miss Midget made a pout expression. "Dax, you promised," she said.

I should say that Mister Dax Oleander has a rather wolfish look. How ever, he made an all most sheepish smile at Miss Lula. He picked up his napkin. He dabbed his lips. He pushed his chair back. Then, he stood up.

Miss Lula turned around so we did not see her face, which she put on Master Joshua Oleander's hair. His hair is wispy, white gold hair. I have mentioned it. She carried him out of the room then.

After that, those travelers went from the back yard to their Volkswagen van three, or four, or more times. They were packing out their tents, as well as their bed rolls. Miss

Lula sat with Master Joshua Oleander, in the parlor, on the divan. She was stroking his hair. When those travelers were ready to go, Miss Midget came to pick him up, but Master Joshua Oleander shied from her. "I want to walk," he said, so he walked. Miss Lula followed him out the door, then, down the flag stones to the curb. I stayed in the door way. When he was going to step up past the sliding door of that van, Master Joshua Oleander turned to look back at me.

He sipped some thing invisible from his invisible spoon. "Whut am I eating?" he said

I said, "Whut?"

"Doody," he said.

"Oh no," I said.

Master Joshua Oleander laughed. "Whut am I drinking?" he said.

"I do not know," I said.

"Peepee," he said.

"Oh no, I said, so he laughed an other time.

He sipped from his spoon one more time. "Whut am I eating now?" he said.

"Whut?" I said.

"Boogers," he said, so I groaned. Master Joshua Oleander laughed some more.

He was still laughing when the door slid shut.

Chapter 35

Dark. Light.

Miss Lula did not want to talk to me when the van was gone. She went in to her bed room. I went in to the parlor. She banged her door shut. I sat on the divan. It is opposite that door. I shut the parlor lights, but lamp light lit the floor under neath the bottom of that door. The grain of the floor wood, as well as the seams of the floor boards, stood out in it. I was studying them. Then she put her door stop in. I saw its triangle shadow poke under. My heart filled then. When Miss Lula put in her door stop, then the next sound that came, would be breath. It was the same breath she filled our old house with, when she spent her night with Assistant Professor Louis Morse. It was the breath she filled her own house with, when she put in her door stop. I waited for it, then it started. It was like some thing. This is what it was like. The sea. When you sit on your blanket, on a line of beach, with the ocean in front of you. Its arms surround you. It bends over the horizon. You do not know the other end of it. You do not know if it has an end at all. It is unbounded, like a god. Its breath draws in, then out, a silent deep booming. Where it is going, where it comes from, you do not imagine. It is a breath with out end. Miss Lula's breath reminded me of it. Hers was smaller, but it filled her house any way. It filled me. I do not know what it filled me with. Most of that night I did not sleep, but I know I did sleep, for this reason. In the morning, I woke up.

The morning had an emptiness in it. It was empty of Master Joshua Oleander. It was not empty of those other people. It was rid of them, but it was empty of him. It is how I felt. I sat up in my sheet. It was a hot morning. When it was that hot, then I only

wore my under pants. When it was even more hot, then I slipped off those under pants, but some times Miss Lula would come out of her bed room to visit the water closet in the night. I would wrap my sheet on me at those times, if I knew about it. I had that sheet not to pollute the fabric of the divan of Miss Lula with my various effluents, such as my perspiration, or my other effluents. It is how it came that I was wearing my sheet.

It was six hours ante meridiem, give ten minutes, or take those minutes. Sun light was under neath the door of Miss Lula. I saw that light when I sat up. I saw the shadow of her door stop in that light. I imagined her lying in that light, so I wished to see her in it. The reason is, Miss Lula sleeps with out any thing on. She had told me, so I knew. For a certain number of minutes, I kept imagining. I do not know the number of them. I was weighing my possibilities. I had a possibility to roll over to sleep some more. I might dream about her, then I might discharge some effluents, but that way it is a hit or miss proceeding. I had a possibility to get up from the divan, and shower my self, and get over to the Kool Kone Ice Kreem Emporium for my shift. I might have scooped those Kool Kones, imagining about her all day with my dammed effluents, then.

Those possibilities had an advantage which my other possibility lacked. This is what it was. After I did one of them, or the other one, then I would not be a low life scum of the earth. How ever, I am one. Here is when you find some thing like that out. When you choose a possibility. Some of those possibilities have that Scum tag on them. It is like shopping. Those tags are like price tags. I picked my Scum possibility, so I paid my Scum price, so I am scum now. I am confessing it.

The air was empty but for sun light. No sound was in it. I saw the walls through it. I pushed through it with out any sound, as the light did. I did not try the door of Miss

Lula. Her door stop stops that door, but her bed room has the glass wall that walls it from the bed room of Master Joshua Oleander. He was not in his bed room, of course. His bed room was empty. His bed room was dark.

Here is how I know his bed room had those qualities. I went in to the kitchen through a portal left of Miss Lula's bed room door. I walked through the kitchen. I walked past the dinner table where Master Joshua Oleander had played his game of pabulum with Mister Dax Oleander last night. That dinner table was on my left side at that time, until I got past it. Then, it was behind me. Then, I was in the pantry. It had the screen door to the back yard. It had old wood shelves with cans on them, such as cans of Campbell's Tomato Soup, as well as Campbell's Chicken and Rice Soup. All so, card board boxes, such as boxes of Uncle Ben's Rice, as well as Major Teetum's Lickin' Good Dried Chicken Niblets from the Dixie Victory Specialty Shoppe. They are not lickin' good. They are not good at all. They are dry. The other side of the pantry has a door to an other room with a glass wall. It is the same glass wall as Miss Lula's glass wall. It is the other side of her glass wall. That is Master Joshua Oleander's room. He was not in it, of course. I was in it. Here is how I got in it. I went past the food pantry shelves. Those shelves were on my right. I went past the back yard screen door. That door was on my left. It is the door that Tom the tom cat used to come in from, as well as out of, prior to his choking to his death. I crossed the thresh hold of Master Joshua Oleander's room. Then, I was in it. That is when I could see that it was empty, as well as that it was dark.

I went to the window. This is how. I crouched on the top of my toes with my hands out to balance. It was like swimming. I thought, "I am swimming through the

dark." The window was a wall size square of light in that dark. I thought, "I am going to see her." Then, I did see her. She was swimming all so. She was swimming in her white sheets. The wrinkles of the sheets made currents around her. She was on her side. Her face was on her arm. That arm was her right arm. Her mouth was open. Her eyes were shut. Her eye lashes did not have their mascara. They had sun light, so they were that sun color. I thought, "She might open her eyes." I was afraid of it. If she opened her eyes, they might blaze at me like two suns. Then I would be blind. My mother had an uncle who went blind once. His name was Lawyer Percy. He was not a lawyer. His name was Lawyer. His mother, who was my great grand mother Percy, thought he should be a lawyer, so she named him one. So, Lawyer Percy went to the law school in Gum. One fine day, he woke up blind in the dormitory of that law school, and so he went in to a closet, and he hung him self with a polka dot tie. He made so much noise, kicking and gargling and so on, that some one came to cut him down. After that person cut him down, he went in to the Gum City Charitable Home. It is a home for crippled people, blind people, and feeble minded people. He was all three at that point, so he was qualified. I do not know why he went blind. Did he watch a naked woman sleeping. I doubt it. How ever, I thought of Lawyer Percy whiles I watched Miss Lula sleeping. I did not think a long time about him. I thought a short time about him. I did not wish to be distracted. When you see the original naked woman of your life, most times you will want to concentrate on her, I believe. I know I did. I had seen features and aspects of the nakedness of my beloved person Miss Lula before, but I had not looked at all of her for as long as I wanted to look at her before. So, I looked. I looked. I looked some more. All that time, my heart was going like this. Whap Whap Whap. Miss Lula was more

wonderful in her body than I had imagined she was. The reason is, she was more strange in her body. I had not thought of it, of course. It would not have been strangeness if I had, of course. I had not thought of how the red of her open mouth would raise strange pity in me. I had not thought of the longness of her nipples, or the wideness of the brown nipple disks that she had. I had not thought how her breasts lolled on her ribs like two sleeping babies, one squished on her sheets, like a baby's fat cheeks, the other hanging on to her side, like a child nursing. I had not thought how pale she was all over her body, not like one who has died, quite, but not quite like one who is living, either. More like a faery or some other spirit, her chest all most completely still with her breathing, which, it was all most invisible, except that her belly button winked, then winked again, then once again. I had not thought of the silvery scars across her hips, like the shirred front of a lady's blouse, or like some thing else more terrible. What, I do not know. I had not thought of the wispy way her hair on her arm pits went all over like hay drying in the sun, or the way the hair from under her stomach to between her legs up in to the skin foldings behind her was darker and more mysterious than her other hair. Dark hair on dark skin. I had not thought of any of it. This is what I want to say. It was all wanting, no thinking, until I saw what I wanted to see, until I saw what I wanted.

Chapter 36

I build my head of steam.

I gave you the occurrents of chapter 1 out of their timely order, of course. They are in some other order. This is the order. First. If I had not give them you first, I had not dared give them you at all. If you remember chapter 1, then you know what happened next. It is an other manner of speaking, of course. All sorts of item happened, between the last item I told you in chapter 35, and the first item I told you in chapter 1, of course. Such as, I ate my break fast. I took my dump, and so on. Miss Lula woke up. She ate her own break fast. She took her own dump, and so on. Various days that were chocked full of several other items came and went. All of those items are absent and omitted from my confessions, for this reason. They are not my awe full deeds. Then, at long last, the items in chapter 1 came along. If you wish to call them to your mind, you can read them in it. I am not going to tell you them twice. This present chapter is my run up to my worst most awe full deed. I build my head of steam in here. Then, in the next chapter, I will blow up, some what like a steam engine which, its pistons are cracked. I am done with this paragraph.

Here are my occurrents of this chapter. They confused me at the times in question. They confuse me at this time, which is about twelve seventeen o'clock post merdien, on 21 October, in the year 2010. It is a beautiful day. Brownny orange leaves are dead all over the prison yard. A squirrel or two is or are dashing in the yard with nuts in its or their hands, except for one dead flat squirrel in the middle of the truck drive way.

I squint when I walk by it. You can hardly tell it is or was a squirrel any more, unfortunately. If you are I, you do not want to. Corbies are pecking at it when I walk by. They greet me with suspicion and noise. Dogs all ways used to greet me with joy. I do not know the reason. I do not know those dogs. Up here, the dogs are all guard dogs. They are not joy full when they see me. I do know the reason. The branches of the trees out side my window are bare, or they are dangling some yellow leaves, or red leaves, or some others of those brownly orange leaves. The sky out side my window is the color of Amazon Blue Bells. Those Blue Bells are flowers. They are blue. They grow or grew under a chinaberry tree on the little green lawn of Miss Lula, for this reason. She planted them. That lawn is or was in side a fence of pickets and abelia bushes and a trellis of scuppernong grapes to keep Tom in. Tom is all so dead, of course. The fence did not keep him in. On the other hand, the fence here, which, it is a fence topped off with the best most shiny and sharp razor wire, keeps me in all right.

Confusion is why I am going to lay out my occurrents in an orderly fashion. Here are my occurrents. This time, I mean it. First, Miss Lula and I went to the Dee Light Theatre and Cinema to watch the well known movie Casablanca. Second, after we watched that movie, we had a supper of buffalo wings on checkered paper in red plastic buckets, next door to the Dee Light Theatre and Cinema, at the Panther Bar and Grill with Jimmy Carter on the over head television. That bar and grill is named for the Amazon State College Panthers. It is one more conundrum of reference, for this reason. Is it named for the basket ball Amazon State College Panthers? Is it named for the foot ball Amazon State College Panthers? Is it named for the legendary immortal undying panther in the Misery Swamp that those foot ball Amazon State College Panthers, and

basket ball Amazon State College Panthers, and some other athlete Panthers in that college, such as the base ball Amazon State College Panthers, for one example, are named for? It is a job for Assistant Professor Louis Morse. I wish I knew where that fellow was or is. Third, we sat on the stoop in the back of Miss Lula's house and had our wonder full colloquy. Fourth, Miss Lula had a cocaine party, and I went to that party. Or, Miss Lula threw a cocaine party, and I threw a fit in the party. When I threw my fit, that was blowing up, of course. I do not blow up in this particular chapter that we are in right now. I told you.

I will not tell you about that party now. I will tell you later. First, I will tell you of going to watch Casablanca. Then, I will tell you of our supper that we had at the Panther Bar and Grill with President Jimmy Carter. Then, I will tell you of sitting out on Miss Lula's front stoop. It is our wonder full colloquy. Then, at the tale end of this chapter that we are in, I will tell you the be all and end all, which, it was Miss Lula's party.

Here is the part where I watched Casablanca with Miss Lula. That woman, who was my only beloved person, neither more, neither less, laughed at me right in to my face. She did not know that she was my beloved person at that time, or, she did know. I had not declared my self at that time, but she laughed at me just as though she knew it. There he is, Mister Rick, on that high screen, in his white dining coat and his black bow tie, with his liquor bottles around him. "Of all the gin joints in all the towns in all the world," he says, and so on along that line, and then he covers his face. He does not weep. I do not weep, either. Pangs are in my stomach, how ever. Then, smash to the bar top, Mister Rick's fist makes his liquor bottles rattle. "If she can take it I can," he says. "Play

it," he says, and Sam plays it. Then smash again. Mister Rick's head bangs down to the bar, and all of those bottles crash and clatter and keel over. Then is when I groaned. I held my head exactly as did Mister Rick, and I groaned my self. Now here comes Miss Lula, leaning her face over to my face, laughing her growly, deep laugh at me. It all most all ways seems to me that a laughing person seems like an idiot. How ever, Miss Lula's laughing makes you your self seem like the idiot, for this reason. There is that much knowing in it. So, I was steamed up at that time, for this reason. I am not an idiot.

The supper we had at the Panther Bar and Grill was not steamed food. It was fried food. All so, it was a glass of carbonated sarsaparilla for my part, and a cup of Joe for the part of Miss Lula. Never the less, that supper had its steam part too, which was this. I became determined. Here is what I determined. To declare my self. My head of steam was building, as you can easily see. All so, I was on track. It is a metaphor. I was turning in to an out of control, steamed up rail road engine. I was tired of being the caboose. I am extending my metaphor, of course. It is a side track. I am going back to my main track. Here it is. What track was I on be fore, you may ask. That track is not the same as the other one, of course. It is two items with one metaphor. My supply of my metaphors is limited, for this reason. I am not sophisticated. How I know is, Mister Louis Morse told me it many times. "You're no sophisticate, young man," he would say, or, he would use similar words. Then, when he was Assistant Professor Louis Morse, he used, several times, the very same words. Then, Miss Lula mentioned it two or three times. She used phrases such as "You ain't the sharpest tack in the drawer, po' boy" and so on. Then, my cell mate Mister Maxwell Mentiroso has suggested it at times. He is more the diplomat, and I can not recall the various phrases he has used, for this reason.

They are too diplomatic. It does not tell you that I am an idiot, how ever. I have gone off my main track once again. I am getting on to it once again. What track, you may ask.

This one. To blow out my pistons.

Miss Lula was chewing on a French fried sliver of a potato. She was under neath the over head television, so, it was over her head. The Honorable Jimmy Carter was up there, getting his self nominated. We were in the day July fifteen of the year 1976. That show on the television was the Democratic Party nominating convention.

Miss Lula said, "I'm having a party, and I want you to come."

"Great," I said. It was sarcasm. I was looking up at the Honorable Jimmy Carter. He is not such a sarcastic fellow as I am, in my opinion. I was not really looking at him, of course. He was in New York City. I can not see that far.

"You be nice to me, or I won't be nice to you," said Miss Lula.

"I will marry the first woman who is nice to me," I said. It was a jest, as well as a literary reference of some kind. I was reading a work of literature of that kind at that time, on the divan where I slept in Miss Lula's parlor. I did not read it whiles I slept, of course. I read it before I slept, of course. I can not sleep and read at the same time.

"Will you come to it?" Miss Lula said.

"Why should I?" I said.

She said, " 'cause I ast you."

"You ain't nice to me. You ain't nice at all," I said.

"Yes I am. You know it," she said. I looked up at the Honorable Jimmy Carter a while. He looked unhappy to me. He sounded unhappy. May be that he knew what he

was in for. I did not know what I was in for, how ever. "You know it, Willy," Miss Lula said.

"Evvy body thinks they so nice," I said.

"You think you nicer than I am?" she said.

"It is ridiculous to ask," I said. Assistant Professor Louis Morse used to say it if some one put him on a spot, such as, "Don't you know you can't have my sensations?" or, "Ain't you read your Thomas à Kempis?" or some other similar spot. I was on my own spot at that time. Miss Lula spotted me. I was spotted all over.

"Excuse me doodee do," she said. She put her fork down. "What you want, anyway?" she said.

I took my eyes down from the Honorable Jimmy Carter. I put them on Miss Lula's own blue eyes. She was wearing sun glasses. Her sun glasses were not in front of her eyes, of course. You can not see the blue of her blue eyes through the brown of her brown sun glass lenses, of course. I was seeing it. Miss Lula's sun glasses were on top of her blond hair, where they did not interfere with my blue eyes contemplations. I have no reason to tell you, except this. I remember it. "I will tell you later," I said.

"Harry's coming with white powders," she said.

"Huh," I said.

"I make my living," she said.

I said, "You could stand down on the corner and twirl your fake Louis Vuitton hand bag." Then, I regretted it.

Miss Lula scraped her chair back. "Boy, whut you mean?" she said.

Even though that I regretted it, I was on my rail road track. I said, "You heard."
Miss Lula stood up and walked away.

Chapter 37

The wonder full colloquy.

In this particular chapter is my wonder full colloquy with Miss Lula. It is what I call it, when I think of it. Here is when I think of it. All the time. I am not all the time thinking of it, of course. I am too busy cleaning the toilets and so on. Rather, I think of it at any old time. It comes on me. I might have been buttering my bread at my break fast table, when I had such a table. I might have been buttering my vegetables at my supper table, when I had one of those particular tables. Those were not the same table, what though, that they were the same item of furniture. It is like the morning star and the evening star. I will tell it to Assistant Professor Louis Morse, or to Assistant Professor Henry Shine, if I chance upon one of them, or the other one of them, for a foot note of their philosophical transactions. I might be tying up my shoes in the morning, or untying those shoes in the evening, or walking in a street. A street is a good place for it, on this account. The sky. I see sky when I think of it. The reason is, I was seeing sky whiles we had that colloquy. We were sitting on the front stoop of Miss Lula's house. We were seeing the evening star. We were not seeing the morning star. At the tale end of our wonder full colloquy, she looked up at the evening star. She did not look up at the morning star. She said, "It's in the stars."

Her stoop was attached to her house. Her house was in some bottom lands. Rain drops came down there, when it rained, and gathered in her cellar in a big pool. It was a

pool party. It was not a cocaine party. It was a water party. It was a mess. Rain drops will not do it on a hill top. They will run down the hill. Consequently, they will run off from your cellar, in that case, but they did not run off from Miss Lula's cellar, in her case. Those rain drops socialized down there as though that there was no tomorrow, and there was not any tomorrow in deed, for Miss Lula would holler, "Get the mop!" and I would get it. I would hurry down there and mop those drops up. The party would be over, then.

What though that house of Miss Lula was not on a hill top and, there fore, her stoop was not on a hill top, never the less, when our wonder full colloquy comes in to my mind, I see her on a hill top. I am kneeling down before her. Her hair is whipping behind her in a froth of wind, and clouds are rushing by over her head, and the grass is thrilling around the hems of her long skirt. The grass is thrilling and I am shivering. Her toes in her sandals are bare, and I want to kiss them. I want to kiss the knuckles on those toes she has one by one. I do not kiss them, how ever. I look at her face. She is not looking at my own face. Her eyes are watching some thing far away.

I say, "Why you let me look at your body?"

She says, "I trust you."

I say, "It killing me."

"Don't say that," she says.

"I can not help it. I adore you," I say.

"Tell me whut you want, then," she says.

I say, "You know all ready."

She is still looking away. She says those words. "It's in the stars, I suppose." It was not in them, how ever.

Chapter 38

An item I have not told you.

An other occasion, which built up my head of steam, occurred between the occasion of my wonder full colloquy with Miss Lula and the occasion of her party, which was not a wonder full party. It was a coke party. It was not a Coca-Cola™ party. It was not a Pepsi-Cola™ party. It was a horror full party. I came home on my bicycle from my shift scooping ice cream cones at the Kool Kone Ice Kreem Emporium at Small Mall in west Gum. I all ways enjoyed that bicycle ride, if it was not raining. I liked that ride. It went down hills all the way. On or near a full moon, the light would shine in my blood, as it seemed to me. I had a silver moon light feeling, in other words, for this reason. Miss Lula was waiting for me. It is a manner of speaking. She was not waiting for me. She was reading her book, or she was washing up some dishes, or may be that she was making up a time to meet with her customer on her telephone, perhaps. It may be that she was tacking her curtains to her window jamb, as she did at times, when the prowl car prowled by, or parked at the curb out side her fence pickets with its red roof light turning. She was not walking up and down in her parlor, thinking some such thought as, "Oh my, I wish that fellow Willy would get here from the ice cream cone emporium," of course. She was not thinking any thoughts about me at all, of course. I was all wised up, or so I thought. "Wise up." Assistant Professor Henry Shine used to tell me to do it, once he had divined my Miss Lula feelings. So I did, or I thought that I did.

When I found out that I had not wised up, was when I rode my bicycle in to Miss Lula's drive way one night and rolled it through her front door. There she was, kissing

Miss Isabel on the divan in the parlor where I sleep. I was not sleeping in it at that time, of course. Miss Lula was sleeping in it. Miss Isabel was all so sleeping in it. They were not asleep, how ever. They were sleeping with each other. They were kissing, and twisting, and murmuring, or sighing, or groaning, perhaps. They did not have their clothes on. Then I wised up after all, as I imagined. Miss Lula's head of hair was silvery from moon light, for this reason. Her parlor lamp was shut off and her window curtain was not tacked to her window jamb. I did not see her face at that time, for this reason. It was in the lap of Miss Isabel. That lap was as though modestly covered by Miss Lula's moon lit hair. How ever, when she heard me, she lifted her face up. I saw the pale skin on it, her cliff cheeks, the shadows they make, her dark lips.

"Excuse me," I said. I stood still in her door way, staring.

She stared back at me with her blue, pale eyes with out an expression. Miss Isabel provided me with some expressions at that time, how ever. She sat up with out covering her self. Here is what I saw. Sweat drops that sparkled on her chest in that moon light. Black hair slicked, like a writhe of snakes, to her sides under her arm pits. Small breasts and little nipples. A tumult of more black hair all afroth in her lap, and climbing to her belly button like a vine. This was her facial expression. Disgust, or contempt, or hatred, or, disgust and contempt and hatred. This was her oral expression. "What you lookin at, asshole?"

"I do not know," is what I said, which it was the truth, for two or three seconds. They had a sheet under them, to keep their sweat off the furniture, as I suppose. Miss Isabel drew that sheet around her and ran away, shaking her hair, cursing. Miss Lula lay there with out any of her clothes, except that she had a red towel on her lap. Where did it

come from, I wonder. One twist of my hand, and it might have been undone. Her breasts fell wide, one left, one right. She looked at me and smiled. It was some how an expressionless smile. After that, I did know what I was looking at, for this reason. I was wised up.

Chapter 39

Miss Isabel assumes room temperature.

Miss Lula was going to have her operation on the first Monday in August, namely, August second. She was going to have her party a day or two before she had her operation. That party was on the night of the last day in July. The day was Saturday. The party was a costume party, all though it was not Halloween. She did not have her party a day or two before her operation, how ever. She had it nine days before. The reason was, she had her operation one week late. The reason she had it one week late was, trouble.

"Why is it a costume party?" I said one day, which was the thirtieth one in July. It was a Friday. "It is not Halloween," I said.

"How do I know I'll be here Halloween?" she said.

"You will," I said.

"I don't know, so how do you know?" she said.

"Well you do not know where you will be on New Year's eve either," I said.

"New Year's bores me," she said.

"Whut are you going to be?" I said.

"That's for me to know and you to find out," she said. "Whut are you going to be?" she said.

"How do I know?" I said.

"You got to be something," she said. "It ain't come as you are," she said.

"Well whut about you?" I said.

"I told you, you'll see," she said.

On Saturday night, here is what I saw. Her door. She was behind that door, saying items such as, "Leemee be, Willy," and "I'm dressing, lemmee alone," and so on.

"It is taking a long time," I said.

"So whut?" said Miss Lula through her door. "Are you dressed yet yourself?" she said.

"Well of course I am," I said. "I do not go around naked," I said.

Her door cracked open, and her eye peered through that crack at me. "Is you a moron, or is you just coming as one?" she said.

"It is a jest," I said, and her door slammed.

"Put something on," she said. She was in her closet. I could tell she was, by certain acoustical signs that I shall not go in to.

"Whut should I?" I said.

She did not reply, but her door cracked open. Out flew a sheet.

"Whut is this for?" I said.

Her eye came to the door an other time. "Well arter all you is a moron," she said. That word arter stands for after in the bottom land farms and the hill towns west of Gum. Those farms are east of Misery Swamp. Those towns are in the Spirit Mountains, west of Misery Swamp. They are called mountains, but they are only hills. That is all in Red Hand Land, where I am from my self, so I know that word arter, of course. "Cut some eye holes in it," Miss Lula said. "You just the ghost of a man anyway," she said. It made me get mad at her, when she said that.

She did not come out until the hall way door bell rang. I opened the door, and there was Miss Isabel, dressed up as a faery princess in a blue chiffon diaphanous gown with spangles on it. I know it, for, when Miss Lula saw that dress, she said this. "Why Isabel, whut a lovely blue chiffon diaphanous gown. And those spangles, I s'wan."

I my self was in my ghost sheet. Miss Isabel kicked my shin as she walked by. She said, "Just right. You're a dead man in my book," she said.

"Whut is that for?" I said.

"Alistair's dog," she said.

"I have been meaning to tell you about it," I said.

She said, "Tell what?"

"It is a misunderstanding," I said.

"Sure," said Miss Isabel. "And you're not a creep," she said. I did not answer her remark, for this reason. I am a creep, of course. She was right for the wrong reason. It is interesting. I can not mention it to Assistant Professor Henry Shine, or to Assistant Professor Louis Morse, at this time, how ever. They are among the missing. "Huh. Where's your professor friends?" she said. She did not say it to me. She said it to Miss Lula, who, she was behind me.

"They are among the missing," Miss Lula said.

"What are you?" Miss Isabel said to Miss Lula.

"I am a Turk," said Miss Lula.

"You look like a prince or something," Miss Isabel said,

"Why thankee," Miss Lula said. She did look like one. I will describe in more detail how she looked. I will not describe it now. I will describe it later.

Miss Isabel donked me on my head with her card board wand. It had colored glitter on it and a glitter star on the end of it. Glitter was on her cheeks like a swarm of stars. A pipe cleaner diadem glued with those glitter stars was on top of her black hair. "Boo," she said. "Now, you ain't a creep. You're just a snake in the grass," she said, and she sashayed past me in to the parlor.

I went in to Master Joshua Oleander's room in the back, so that I would not have to be around them. I took off my sheet and lay on his his bed. It was a small bed. I had to curl up to fit on it. When I woke up, it was a while later. How I know is, I had to pee. Voices were busy in the front of the house. The record on the record player was Rumors. I did my water closet business, and came out in to the parlor with out my sheet. Eleven people were in that parlor, if you include my self. They were Miss Lula, Miss Isabel, my self, Mister Harry some one, who, he was Miss Lula's capo fellow, and seven other people I shall not name, or I do not recall, or both.

First sight I see is Miss Lula bent over a little brass pipe held up to her lips by that Mister Harry some one. I do not know his other name. May be that you recall him from chapter 17. Miss Lula turned to see me and said, "Whey's your sheet?" and then she coughed. Little gray clouds came out her mouth.

"Whut is that smell?" I said.

Mister Harry some one came gliding up to me with a crouching, creeping sort of step. He was a skinny fellow with fair eye brows you could not see, with out you squint at them, and pale skin covered in old dried out pox. He had on a Napoleon hat, or some other similar hat, black with white lace and its brim turned front, and an Arkansas tooth pick, or some other dagger or dirk, which it had a hook blade and a gnarly handle, cut

through that brim. Then he had on high boots with silver buckles on them such as those Pilgrims wore, a white shirt with puffed up sleeves, purple pantaloons, and a plastic sword in the strap of those pantaloons. It was a yellow one. He held out his pipe. "Have a toke," he said. His voice was hoarse and gravelly, for this reason. Some one cut his throat at one time. You still saw the gash from ear to ear. May be, that the some one who cut his throat was Harry some one him self. I do not know. He was cheer full, however. His smile was silver, for this reason. His teeth are silver, except for his left side dog's tooth, which is gold and a diamond. It is conspicuous consumption.

"It's conspicuous consumption," said Assistant Professor Louis Morse, back in chapter 17, except, I did not decide to include it at that time. I am including it now, however.

Back here, in this particular chapter, I said, "Never mind," but I changed it, or, I decided I ought to change it, so then I said, "I believe I will change my mind." My reason was, I am afraid to make my stand if I am in my sober mind. I was bound to make it, for this other reason. My head of steam was all built up and ready to go. Therefore, I ought not remain in my sober mind. It was my conclusion. I did not know how, however, so I said, "How?"

Mister Harry some one laughed and laughed. He slapped his knee in side his pantaloons. "Did you hear that?" he said. "Did you hear that?"

I was mad all ready, so I did not become mad. I became more mad. "Give it me," I said, and I took his little brass pipe. It was hot, which I did not expect, so I dropped it. Mister Harry some one laughed some more. I picked it from the floor and sucked on the

hot brass stem. Smoke bitterly burned my tongue. Then it burned my throat. Then it burned my wind pipe. I flung the pipe off some where and said, "God damn."

"Did you see that?" Mister Harry some one said, and he laughed some more.

The air in the parlor seemed to go yellow, or orange. "It's orange," I said. The room tilted, then. Mister Harry some one was laughing and slapping. Miss Lula came close, but she was tilting too. "Straighten your self," I said to her, and Mister Harry some one clutched his belly and bent over with his many gravelly hoarse laughs, or, horse laughs. It is a jest. Miss Lula was looking closely in my eyes. Her eyes were close to my eyes. Heat from her face was heating my face. I liked it. "I like it," I said.

She pulled her face away from my face. "Whut," she said.

I said, "Your heat," and I reached my arms around her waist.

"Hey," she said, and stepped back further. "Whut's with you?" She was standing approximately forty five degrees from vertical, as it seemed to me at that time.

"You do that awe fully well," I said. The floor tilted and I slid towards her. When I got to her, I made my arms circle her waist. It was just the most delicious sensation. She pushed me back at the shoulders, how ever, and I lost my grip.

"Get off," she said.

"I am all ready off," I said.

"Put your sheet on," she said. "I don't want to look at you," she said.

"I am horny, Miss Lula," I said.

Mister Harry some one twirled around once, howled once, and slapped his knees. Miss Lula turned her back on me and said some thing. Her voice had no tone in it.

"Whut did you say?" I said. The reason is, I did not hear what she had said, of course.

She turned in my direction and said, "I said, we all fall into that category from time to time."

At that particular time, a scream issued from Miss Isabel, who was lying down on the divan. Her back was arching. Her arms were out wide, and her fingers were fluttering in time with her eye lids. Her eye balls, under neath those eye lids, were rolled and white. I did not know if she was funning me, or if she was not. So I said, "Are you funning me? Or not?" In stead of an answer coming from her, retching came from her. No thing much came of it but some black spittle, which, it dribbled on her chin. A rubber hose was tied around her arm. A hypodermic needle was sticking in her arm. I did not know what it was, so I said, "What is that?"

"Oh my Gawd," said Miss Lula tone fully. They were deep, woe full tones.

Miss Isabel was blue all over. She was dead, or so we thought. "We" is Miss Lula and my self. Ever one else had left the parlor, for some reason. They had all so left the house for the same reason, or some other reason. I did not want to see Miss Isabel's eyes. They were open. They are black eyes. They were watching me. Miss Isabel was not watching me. Her eyes were watching me. I did not want my eyes to see her eyes, so I shut my eyes. I did not shut her eyes, for this reason. I did not want to touch her eyes.

"Oh Gawd," said Miss Lula an other time. She put her arm under neath the neck of Miss Isabel. "Wake up," she said, but Miss Isabel did not do it. Miss Lula clasped Miss Isabel's blue shoulder and shook it a bit. "She's ice," she said. "Wake up. Wake up, wake up," she said, but Miss Isabel did not wake up. "Willy, go get my fake leather

Louis Vuitton hand bag off the kitchen table," Miss Lula said, so I did. I opened my eyes to see my way, but I did not look at Miss Isabel at that time. When I came back, Miss Lula said, "Get out my compact," so I did that too.

To find her compact, I had to put my hand in there and rummage all about. It gave a queer thrill to me. There was used tissue papers, and a Camels cigarette pack, and a chartreuse plastic cigarette lighter, and car keys, and a pink leather coin bag. I know those colors for this reason. I was flinging those items out of that hand bag. That coin bag was genuine pink leather. So it seemed. The most thrill was in the tissue papers, for this reason. They were tainted with Miss Lula's various facial bodily fluids. I was sure of it. I touched them, but they were dry, not damp, as I had imagined they might be. I was disappointed.

Miss Lula reached out her left hand towards me. I was behind her. She did not look at me, for she was looking at Miss Isabel, the torso of whom was spread, all limp and blue, across Miss Lula's knees. Miss Isabel's skin was all most the same shade of blue as the color of her faery princess dress. Her dress was a blue, pale shade. She was blue and her dress was blue, so you could not see, all most, where her arms left off and her sleeves began. You could not if you were my self. If you were an other person, it might have gone an other way, of course.

"Give me it," Miss Lula said. I slapped her compact down in to her palm. It was a brown horn case with a mirror and a talcum puff. I have seen such items in my own mother's pocket book. My mother's pocket books were all genuine black plastic. Miss Lula flipped her compact open and held it out in front of Miss Isabel's face. The mirror fogged once. The fog cleared off, and we waited for a long time. It fogged an other time,

but, once that was done, it did not fog up again, all though we waited and waited.

"Sheeeiit," Miss Lula said in a long slow whisper. She slammed her compact to the floor. Then she clutched Miss Isabel's ears. Then she clamped her own lips onto Miss Isabel's cold, pale lips. I do not know they were cold, of course. I only know that they were pale, of course. However, I imagine that they were cold. Miss Lula pinched Miss Isabel's nose shut with her left hand. She cradled Miss Isabel's head with her other hand. She blew in to Miss Isabel's mouth. Miss Lula's cheeks blew out and out. She pulled away from Miss Isabel and gasped some air. Then she wiped Miss Isabel's lips. Then she wiped her own lips. Then she clamped on for an other go. This went on, how long, I am not aware. Between times, when she came up for air, Miss Lula took turns saying "Gawd," or "Oh Gawd," or "God damn," or "Shit". She uttered all of those words in one tone of voice. Here is the tone it was. Praying. Miss Lula got her compact off the floor and tried it on Miss Isabel an other time. No thing. "Nothing," she said. Then she slammed her compact on to the floor again.

I said, "Call a doctor."

"We dasn't," Miss Lula said.

I said, "She could die."

"She dead right now," Miss Lula said.

I said "She can not be dead."

Miss Lula whispered, "Well, she is, though."

I looked at Miss Isabel draped, as she was, on Miss Lula's knees. Her head was back. Her throat was not blue. It was the whitest throat of any throat in the world. Her mouth was open now. Her eyes were open. A stillness was on her that was terrible to

see. A person who, she is alive, is never so still as Miss Isabel was at that particular time. She did not look real. I said, "All right." My stomach dropped. It is a figural expression. My stomach did not really go any where.

In her low voice, Miss Lula began to keen. It was not any song in particular. It was a trembling, moaning sound with out words in it. She went on a while. Then another sound came along side of her keening. A sigh was escaping the mouth of Miss Isabel. It whispered and it rasped. It gurgled and it gasped. Ghosts cried out, it seemed to me, in that sigh she was letting. It came a long time. Yet she did not stir; she remained as still as she had been. It was awe full, so I shrieked. Then I jumped back. Then I shrieked some more.

Miss Lula ceased her keening. "Dead people will do that way," she said.

I said, "I am calling an ambulance."

Miss Lula did not answer. She only petted Miss Isabel's hair.

"Why dasn't we?" I said.

She said, "If they put me in a prison, I'll die myself."

"What if she is alive?" I said.

Miss Lula stopped petting the hair of Miss Isabel and looked at me. She took hold of my wrist. Her hand was warm. She tightened her hold on me. She pulled me over towards Miss Isabel, and she made me touch Miss Isabel's blue hand, which, it still had in it her magic wand. Miss Isabel's hand felt just like clay. "Elle est allée languinée," Miss Lula said. She went to Heaven. I did not believe it, for this reason. I did not want to believe it.

"She cold," I said. The record on the record player was over. Out side, you could hear crickets creaking and tree frogs croaking, if you were I. And I was, of course.

Miss Lula said, "She room temperature. Help me now. If it please you."

Chapter 40

Miss Lula Smith tells my fortunes.

We took Miss Isabel down to the Misery River. That river wanders over hill and dale south of Gum, down to Misery Swamp. Then it creeps in to that swamp, under rubber plants and hanging moss on weeping willows, beneath arches of high oaks, which are called blood oaks, for this reason. They are the color of blood. The swamp goes on for hours, if you are paddling through it in a stolen aluminum wherry. We were paddling that way. Before they are stolen, the Gum City Parks Departments keeps those wherries stacked at the north end. It is where we stole one. At the other end of that swamp, the Misery River widens out in to a lake of scum green water, called Dammed Lake for this reason. A dam is at the south end of it. Beavers made that dam. We could not see the green of the scum, or the blood of the oaks, on this further account. We were not on the lake. We were on the river. However, when we got on to the lake, we yet still were all most incapable of vision. It was the dark of the night. There was one thin crescent of moon to show us our way. It did not show us any colors, however.

Miss Lula was up front of the wherry. I was in the rear of it. Between us, wrapped in a feather comforter from her head to her toes, Miss Isabel lay in the bottom of it. I could feel the weight of her when she rolled a bit to shift the center of our gravity. I could not see her. I did not want to. I could see the shape of Miss Lula cuttened out of the stars. I wanted to. I did not want to be alone in my Misery. It is a jest, but I was not jocose at that time. I was in misery. It is why, it is a jest.

It is beyond my telling, the way that I felt at that time. It was not like a dream. In a dream, you believe the scenarios. A dream fools you that way, at least, mine do me. I do not know your dreams, but mine are difficult to view. I can see them, but I can not view them so easily. My dreams are as visible as any thing, but their colors are dim and pale. My eyes can not view them too closely. It is trouble to hone on details, in my dreams. They just slide away. They go on out the corner of my eye, in my dreams, like hants laughing around a corner. If I try to view closely some thing I am dreaming of, such as, some specks on a butter fly wing, then my eye lids just gain weight. My eyes roll off in two directions. I get sleepy. I am all ready sleeping, of course. Then, I can not view those butter fly wing specks I am looking for. An other item of my dreams is, I do not hear much in them. Unless some one says some thing to me, the only sound in them is the occasional singing at the end of them that brings my tears. It is the occasional end of my dreams. If some one says some thing to me, then I will hear what the person said, of course. I do not know how else I might know what was said. I heard the person. I surmise it, but I do not recall the hearing.

I felt an other way on the Misery River. I could view every item. I viewed night crawlers oozing up the tree trunks, even their hundred feet shuddering in their tiny waves. I viewed big slow bubbles, breathed out by frogs in the mud banks, rise up to the skin of the stream and burst in to diamonds of moon light. I viewed that light passing through the down on Miss Lula's cheeks, and across her hair. It did not shoot out the ends of her hair, the way Mister Jimmy Stewart said that it did from Miss Donna Reed's hair, in the well known movie *It's A Wonderful Life*. There was too little of it sprinkling from that high up finger nail of a dead moon, winking in and out between the vines, to shoot that

way. Yet it glistered the way it does off the eyes of Mister Orson Welles in the other well known movie, *The Third Man*. He comes out of the shadow, then it glisters that way. It was not a romantic light, of course. It was a horripilating light. It was real. I knew it, yet I did not believe it. I wished it was not, but I knew that it was. So, I prayed that it was not. The reality of the light insisted on its self, how ever. It came in to my two eyes as venom comes in to bitten flesh. It whirled through the blood of my heart and it poisoned me.

I could hear every thing. I heard bubbles of frog air tear open and fall apart. I heard the feet of the night crawlers whisper on the tree bark. I heard the slap of our paddles in the Misery River, like cymbals crashing. No faerie chorus sang me to tears, the way it will do at the end of dreams some times. Our breath gasped and rasped through the throats of Miss Lula and my self. We were in the most dread full hurry, but I do not know what we were hurrying from. The City of Gum Municipal Parks Police were far behind us. They were coming for us. We did not know it, but we were fleeing them full tilt any way.

It was a red comforter on Miss Isabel. The moon light made it seem black. Miss Isabel's blue faery princess costume was under it. I could not see that costume, of course. Her panties were under her blue faery costume. I saw them when we were tossing her up and down whiles we were endeavoring to revive her. They were blue panties. Miss Lula was in her yellow Turkish prince robe, but she had tossed her carmine turban away some where. Her golden tresses and her prince affair matched shade for shade and hue for hue, but those hues were no thing to admire in that moon light. It washed them out to about the color of the dirt at the rim of a lime pit. Lime is not the color of a lime, of course. It

is not color full at all. In the terrible dark light, my eyes grasped for some thing to hold on to. Miss Lula's hair was all they could find, even though it looked that way. I stared and I paddled. I paddled and I stared. Then her voice shuddered on her raggedy breath, "Don't look me that way."

"How can you tell where I am looking?" I said, for she was in the front of that wherry, of course. I have told you.

She said, "I feel your eyes."

I said, "What else I got to look for?"

Miss Lula turned only her head across her shoulder, while she kept up her rowing. Her eye lid kohl glowed, some how, dark green. Bits of diamond glistened in her eyes. The cliffs of her cheek bones cast shadows on her cheeks. Her lips stretched dark around the circle of her mouth, which was wide open to catch her breath. Her sweating stuck her hair to the roundness of her skull. She looked like a ghost, or a banshee, but this was my thought. It was this. Beautiful. Beautiful. Beautiful.

"You all forsaken nuts," Miss Lula said.

"I love you," was my reply. Then I felt light.

Miss Lula looked away and shook her head. She straightened her back, stowed her oars, and then she looked at me again. I looked at her. My paddles were in the air. The wherry turned like the hand on a stop watch. "Well out comes it," she said. Her breath was shaking. She looked down at what was between us. Then she looked back up. The wood at the edge of the river was turning in the darkness. That lifeless shred of moon came around behind Miss Lula. Then a halo shined forth from her head—fine rays of purple and silver, stabbing out in all directions through a circle of white. Her cheeks

turned to stone. The glister dimmed out of her eyes and they became black wells. She leaned forward across what was between us and she seized my hands. Her grip crushed knuckle on knuckle. I was surprised by it. Those black wells were swelling to drown her face, then to drown me. "You ain't a child," she said.

"I am a man," I said.

"I am talking," she said. Her breath came in rips, as if she was tearing it out of the lightless air. She said, "Be quiet, then."

"All right," I said.

She squeezed down on my knuckles. The bones rubbed together, so I groaned.

Miss Lula said, "Here is your life that is going to come, Willy Wilson." She squeezed on my hands until tears came to my eyes. "Here is the truth," she said. She inclined her head at what was below our locked hands. "Look at it," she said. "You will hurt more women, and more women, and more women," she said.

I said, "No way," and I pulled my hands out of her grip.

Miss Lula said some other words with her torn breath. They hissed out under the shadows of her cliff cheeks, which, those shadows cloaked them. I did not hear the words, but I knew, any way, what they had been. Here they are. "I see it." That is three words.

Chapter 41

We hurry.

There are all kinds of light in that Misery swamp. The rotted grass and fruits and vines and so on in the muck of it do not glow. However, if they are not entirely rotted, only rotting some what, why, then they cast a shine at the scum that floats on the water. All so, at the water its self, as well as at the eyes of the creatures that are shining in there. You see some eyes that way. Up among the lazing vines, between the blood oaks, the moon, even if it is only a dirty finger nail clip of a moon, supplies a grey illumination. I am spelling it Grey in stead of Gray, to this purpose. It is darker that way. It is not so dark as the light of mortified vegetation. It shows you eyes in it some what better.

For example, the eyes of the panther swamp hant. Its dam was slain by the pirate Mister Allen Lee in the year 1713. He is all so the one who slew the other pirate, Captain Yellow Tom. Misery Swamp grows the loyal sarsaparilla bush. The beans on that bush are in the care of that panther. They are prized for their syrup, but people rarely gather any. They do not dare. The panther will eat them. It is the last one. It dwells alone.

Miss Lula told me that tale at her kitchen table, after Master Joshua Oleander was taken off by his father, Mister Dax Oleander. Miss Lula told numerous tales to me. We passed time in the evenings that way. That one night, I was looking at her eyes, which

were wavering in the flickers of a tall red candle that she had. Mine were wavering as well, I imagine. I reason from the symmetry.

I asked her at that time, "What happened to the other cubs of the litter?"

Miss Lula said, "It isn't told." She looked at the box of Camel cigarettes in her hands and she tapped one out. "My lighter is in my bag?" she said. I loved to put my hands in that bag. She knew it. Her bag was on the chair next to me. She watched me dig for her plastic lighter. I handed it off. "Thank 'ee," said she. I watched her flick on the raspy wheel which sparked the flame. The tip of her Camel cigarette caught bright red. Miss Lula's cheeks sucked in under her cheek bones and the smoke curled out her nose. I do not like cigarette smoke, but I did not mind hers. "But you know whut?" she said. "I have an idee on it," she said.

I said, "Whut."

Miss Lula stared at my eyes. Her own ones went round and vague, by which I mean this. They were not focused on me.

"They looked for the teat, but she was run through by the saber of Six Bits Lee," said Miss Lula.

I said, "A huh."

"Her cubs were lined up at those dry dee teats" Miss Lula said.

"Sure," I said.

"She was staring off in to the tall grass beyond the hollow they were in," Miss Lula said.

I said, "All right," an other time.

Miss Lula said, "Her heart stopped, then."

"I understand," I said.

Miss Lula came back from her visions. She stared at me. Her stare said, "No you don't."

After I was embarrassed a while, I said, "Whut then?"

"I don't know right whut then," she said. She changed her stare to a speculating expression. "Maybe," she said. I abated my breath. Miss Lula lowered her voice, which had been fairly low all ready. "Maybe," she said an other time. I held my tongue. She hung her face low down. Then she said, "That Misery panther cub, she et the other ones. She chewed they limbs off and she et those limbs." She thought a while. "And they brains, and they other offals," she said. Miss Lula popped her eyes. Then she snapped her jaws. I saw its cubby fangs crunch papery skulls and swallow spouts of little cubby brains.

"Huh," I said. Then I had my turn thinking. "A she, is it?" I said.

Miss Lula sat up. She had a slow suck on her cigarette. She put it down in her ash tray. It was a vast, pearly, oyster shell, or some other shell, with prismatic hues on its inward surface. Those hues changed their colors whiles you watched them when it was clean, but it was not clean that night. It was ashy. Miss Lula let the white smoke curl out of her lips. She sunk her head between her shoulders then she tilted her head as though to say, "I hardly believe you asked me that."

"Well of course it's a she," she said.

"How does she live so long?" I said.

Miss Lula said, "She can't die."

"How comes it?" I said.

"Don't you know anything at all?" Miss Lula said.

"I suppose you do," I said.

"Well of course I don't," she said.

"You know what I think?" I said.

Miss Lula twirled her blue eyes, pushed up her pale, fair eye brows, and gave me her patented smile. It is her purse-lipped one. She told me one day. She was looking at her teeth in her walnut chiffonier's mirror and she saw me watching. Rather, she saw a reflection of me watching. She pouted her lips. Then she raised her eye brows, while her two eyes contacted the reflections of my two eyes. Then she said it. "It is my patented smile," she said. "Watch out when you see it, for it is a spell," she said.

"You have been taken in," I said.

She said, "I knew you say that."

"It's a faery tale," I said.

"Yank talk," said Miss Lula. "You a yankee now?" she said.

I said, "They ain't no such panther." Now I am going to change paragraphs.

In this paragraph, we are not in Miss Lula's bed room. We are not in her kitchen, either. We are back in Misery Swamp, and she has just done with her prophesying. At that moment, I saw that panther's eyes, as well as its eye lashes, with two finger nails of moon between them, peeping at me from behind a screen of reeds. So, I regretted my error.

Miss Lula saw those two eyes too. She leaned forward from the front of the wherry to see them better. She was panting. She put her right hand up behind her to show me her palm. It means, be quiet.

I said, "God," any way. The eyes vanished. The eye lashes vanished. The moon finger nails flashed off and on three or four times. Then, they vanished too.

Miss Lula murmured, "Oh, bother." She did not say Brother. She said Bother. Then she said, "Book." She did not murmur it. She yelled it. So, I did. I did not yell, of course. I booked, of course.

At one time or an other, I will read a crime book with color full covers. A man in a trench coat comes from the shadows with a square barrel hand gun. A woman in a slip holds her fists up to her cheeks, which are framed in red curls, or blonde curls, or dark curls, whiles her lips are shaped in an O. It means that she is saying "Oh," of course. You look at her, and you hear in your mind that radio voice that tells you about the Shadow or the Dark Knight. This time it is saying, "Cold fingers of fear trickled down her throat," or some similar words. It is what I felt in the swamp at that time. Cold fingers of fear trickled down my throat. I could not have been more surprised. I all ways thought those fingers came from books. They do not come from there. They come from the throats of people who are horrified and terripilated. Now I know it. I am reflecting on it in tranquility. It is tranquil where I am, which, it is Arctica. Snow is on the roofs of the prison buildings. I am not horripilated at this time, nor am I terrified. I am tranquil. I am reflecting on my past emotions in my present tranquility. When we were booking along, I did not reflect on any thing. It was a rush situation.

Chapter 42

We regret our actions.

Here is a puzzle. I was not reflecting, but Dammed Lake was reflecting. It was reflecting a full moon, but the moon was not full. When the vines thinned out in front of us, there it was on the surface of that wide lake, as round as a Gorgon's eye. I did not understand it. So I said, "I do not understand it."

Miss Lula shipped her oars and looked at the round moon on the water. She looked at the finger nail moon in the sky. Then she looked at the one on the water another time. Her oars swept the air with her breathing, like the wings of a butter fly resting on a daisy. They went in, then out, then in again. Slow, then fast, then faster.

"What is happening?" I said.

"Shhh," said Miss Lula. She pointed her pale right hand at the water, where floated pinwheels of color full fire. They were reflections from the little stars high up in the night. She said "Look 'ee, a wonder." Then, she picked up the heels of Miss Isabel in her blanket. "Help now," she said.

I put my hands in Miss Isabel's arm pits. You may know, for some reason, or, for some other reason, how it is to throw the body of a person, whom you loved at one time, in to the water, never to be seen or touched, ever again. I imagine you do not know, however. For example, it does not feel the way it does, as a mercy, to throw your dog bit deathly wounded cat off a bridge. I have done both of these actions. If you do not know

how they feel, I can not tell you. I can tell you this. They feel bad. I can all so tell you this. If ever you have the choice, do not throw a person. Throw a cat.

"She is still warm," I said.

"You may think it," Miss Lula said. She pulled at the shoes of Miss Isabel, which shoes came off and floated away, trailing glitter. The wherry skewed on its keel. "Come on," said Miss Lula, so I pushed my end of Miss Isabel over board. That was her head end, so her head was in the lake at that time. So were her arms. The blanket did not go in, so she was not covered. I had preferred other wise. Miss Lula was pushing Miss Isabel's other end in to Dammed Lake at her side of the wherry. That end of her had her hips, her back side, as well as her legs, so it was her heavy end. Miss Lula lifted the legs of Miss Isabel on to her shoulders and pushed them over board. The rest of Miss Isabel would not follow them, how ever. Miss Lula covered her face with her two hands, and she sobbed. She covered her own face, not Miss Isabel's face. That particular face of Miss Isabel was under the water.

Here is a review of how the matter stood at that time. The wherry that we were in was adrift near Christian Broker's dam, which was a high pile of timbers stretched between two shores a mile or so off on that Dammed Lake, like a curtain rising on a magic show. Miss Isabel's various parts were in the wherry, or they were hanging out the wherry. It depends which part. Her central parts were in the wherry. Her face, as well as her various limbs, were under the water. Her weight was tipping that wherry towards her side of it. I was at my end of it, holding my ears. Miss Lula was at her end of it, holding her mouth. The ordinary, normal moon and stars were in the dim, dark heavens where

they ought, whiles, how ever, the magical reflections of the moon and stars on the surface of Dammed Lake were a blaze of glory.

At that time, the wherry tipped, so we two had to dance to keep our balance. The central parts of Miss Isabel slipped over the side. Splash, she floated away. Her face rolled out of the water with all sorts of matter on it, such as, brown, rotten leaves, and silvery cob webs, and ooze and goo of frogs and lizards and fish egg sacs, and some other items, just when she came to the round, white moon light on the lake. She was lying on her back in the power of that moon. So it seemed. Her hair spread out. Black radiance, in white radiance, in colored fire, with her eyes wide open in the midst of all. I s'wan. Her faery princess dress billowed. Little sparks of aluminum foil, which, she had pasted them on it, floated away, shining like fire flies. Her arms went wide out, floating. She looked like she was saying Welcome to the finger nail moon high up, straight over her.

Now, listen. Miss Isabel blinked then. Then, she coughed. "What are you doing to me?" she said. Her voice sounded as close as a whisper in your ear. Water will do distant voices that way. "Fuck," she said. She pulled her arms in to swim, but that faery gown got in her way, some how, so she did not swim. She sank.

I shrieked several times. Miss Lula did not shriek. Miss Lula pulled her shoes off. Then she popped a button on her waist, so her skirt fell off. Here is a surprise. In that moon light, Miss Lula was naked all the way down. It is a sight that I can not forget. I do not want to forget it. She had a long, deep belly button, like a gash. Her hip bones were cliffs, like her cheek bones. Under neath her where her legs joined up, her hair was a dark hank, like a mop. It looked terribly different than it did in morning light. Miss Lula stepped off the wherry at that time, so the wherry turned over. The oars floated

away. I can not swim, you know. Or, you do not know it. Why should you. I could not swim at that time, either, so I hung on to the hull as well as I could. It was a smooth hull, so I held on to the rivets. They were small to grip. I slipped off them. I swallowed water, which, I choked on it. Miss Lula paid no attention to my sounds. She set out with chopping strokes for the spot where Miss Isabel had sunken away. That was just a spot of empty rings, lit with impossible moon light. The elbows of Miss Lula, as well as her heels, were all I could see of her. When her head did come up, she had the head of Miss Isabel in the crook of her arm. She had the rest of Miss Isabel as well, of course, but you could not see it. It was under the surface of the lake, fighting the rest of Miss Lula. They were crying out various expostulations, such as, for example, Let Go, or Bitch, or similar phrases. I was expostulating as well. Here is what my expostulation was. Help. I said it several times, but no one helped me. After some time, all that arguing tailed off. All I heard, then, was a rhythm beat of splashing, and all I saw was the face of Miss Lula coming towards me on the water.

I swear, in that moon light, her hair was like Rapunzel's spunned gold, curving down over her fore head and fanning out behind her. Her lips and her eye lashes were as black as blood. Her cliff cheeks were white, more white like bone than white like skin. And her eyes were like pieces of a blue stone of some kind, such as blue sapphire, or lapis lazuli, or some other, unnatural kind. She got over to the wherry and pulled her self aboard. I was shocked, of course. I could not stop looking to her breasts. She heaved for her breath and coughed several times. "Cover me with that blanket," she said, so I did.

Part Three

Gummian Nights.

Chapter 43

Detective Willy Wilson.

I detected that some one was following us back. Miss Lula told me to row, which I did, of course. She her self did not row. She huddled and trembled under the blanket. There fore, if I wanted to listen, I did not have to say, "Miss Lula, I want to listen, please stop your rowing." I just would ship the oars and listen, in that case. Some times, she would say, "Whut did you stop for?" or words to that effect, or other words to that effect. Then, this is what I said. Shhh, or Ssst, or some similar saying. Then, we would both listen. This is what we heard. Ripples of water, slipping down the sides of the wherry. Night breezes in the leaves and the vines. Frogs plopping and bubbles popping. That old panther, coughing. She, or he, or it, was following us. You can not mistake a panther coughing for a person coughing. It is not personal. It is impersonal, as a wood spirit is impersonal, for this reason. It is a wood spirit. Some persons were all so following us, how ever. Behind those other sounds, we heard some other sounds, which were these. Splashing of oars. Laughing, carried over the water. When we heard them, Miss Lula spoke up. "Book," she said, so I did. I booked all the way across Dammed Lake in the hoar light. It was not a fantastic light any more. It was just dim grey. It is what Hoar means. I am using Hoar for this reason. It is a deathly word. After I booked across the lake, I booked up stream, until my arms were too tired for any more rowing. I stopped booking at that time. I stopped rowing all together, and we listened.

"Do you hear them," I whispered.

Miss Lula said, "Nuh."

I listened. Creek water ran across the shore rocks. "Can you be sure," I said.

"Don't make me laugh," she said. She wheezed several times.

I looked at her with an expression on my face that said What?

"My oh," she said. "Whut's more funny. Asking it, or caring."

"I think we lost them," I said.

"Oh my yes," she said. She laughed out loud then.

When we got back to the house, the stars all ready were melting in to the day light. A police car was parked at the curb as usual. This fat fellow who usually sat in it all night, Officer Sloane, had his head out the window of it, watching us park behind him. "Morning," said he. "Where y'all been?"

I was afraid to get out of the car. Miss Lula was not afraid, how ever. She got out of it. She walked past this Officer Sloane and did not look at him. "Don't you know?" she said.

That police car had six windows. One in front. One in back. Two on the passenger side. Two on the driver side. I was sitting in the passenger seat of Miss Lula's car behind it. It was Assistant Professor Louis Morse's car Pegasus, of course. I saw an other man's head stick out the police car window, behind the window out which Officer Sloane's head was sticking. That was the left rear driver side window of that police car, of course. Officer Sloane's head did not have any hair on it. It had fat rolls on it. They rolled around its neck and across its jaw and around its ears. The head behind his head had black hair. It had no fat rolls. Officer Sloane's head had a police uniform hat on it. The black hair head behind his head did not have a police uniform hat on it. The black

hair head had a base ball hat on it. The man with that head on him was not wearing a police uniform. He was wearing a base ball uniform, of course.

"You look wet," the base ball fellow said. He was facing away from me. It was so still at that early hour, how ever, that I heard him.

Miss Lula turned and stared at him. She was wet. It is the reason she looked wet, of course. "Who are you supposed to be?" she said, and he answered her. I did not hear his answer, how ever. Miss Lula's eyes went wide and she glanced back at me. I thought I had better get out of Pegasus, so I did. I was more scared, and still more, as I walked up to the fellow. "You got a base ball game this morning?" said Miss Lula.

"Oh, sawta," the base ball fellow said, and he smiled at me. "Who's this?" he said at me, all though his words were not addressed at me.

"You ain't believe it," Miss Lula said.

"What?" the base ball fellow said.

"He Willy Wilson too," Miss Lula said.

"Dog," said the base ball fellow, and he put his left hand out the window. He was a left handed fellow, apparently.

"Detective Wilson," he said. "Willy Wilson," he said.

I felt relieved. It was a mistaken identity. I did not under stand for whom, or for what, I had been mistaken, how ever. "It is a mistaken identity," I said. "I am not Detective Wilson," I said. "I am Doctor Wilson," I said.

"Of course you ain't," the base ball fellow said. "I am," he said.

"You whut?" I said.

"Detective, man," he said.

"Oh you a detective?" I said, and I shook his hand. "Glad to know you," I said.

"Detective Wilson," he said.

"Huh," I said, and I shook his hand some more. I did not know what else to do with it.

"Detective Willy Wilson," he said.

I dropped his hand. "You ain't," I said.

"Oh yes," he said. He pushed his door open and stepped out. Then I saw how tall he was. He was tall. He put the backs of his hands on his hips and looked me up and down. "You don't look related," he said. "Where your people hail from?"

I said, "Red Hand Land. "

"You connected to an attorney there?" he said.

"My daddy," I said.

"And what's his name?" he said.

I said, "President."

Miss Lula emitted some sound, such as a snicker, or a snort.

"Middle name Woodrow, right?" Detective Willy Wilson said. He slapped his knees. "We are," he said.

"How did you know?" I said. "Are whut?" I said.

"Related," he said.

"We are?" I said.

"Dog," he said, and I said it too. It is short for I Be Dogged, of course. We say it that way in Red Hand Land.

Chapter 44

Suspicion.

Miss Lula walked up the flag stones to her door. Her hair was bouncing. Miss Lula has a gait that bounces, as though she is climbing stairs all the time. When her hair is in a pig tail, you see the pig tail bounce. Her hair was not in a pig tail. Her hair was wet, loose brown tresses and blonde tresses plastered to her neck. It bounced any way. Her white shirt was all so plastered to her body. Her pink shoulder blades showed through it in back. Her brown nipple circles showed through it in front. All this plastering was for the obvious reason, which is, she was wet, of course. Detective Willy Wilson looked suspicious of her. He followed her with a narrow eye gaze. Then, he followed her with his legs. He walked up the flag stones and tapped her pink shoulder blade as she was unlocking her door.

"I'm suspicious of you," he said. "I'm taking you in," he said.

Miss Lula turned around as her door was swinging open. "Whut charge?" she said.

"Suspicion," he said.

"Bull shit," she said.

Detective Willy Wilson stepped back once, spread his fingers, and showed her his two palms. "Whoa," he said.

"Ain't no charge like that and you know it," she said.

"You can walk back down there to where my friend Sloane is, without any bracelets on, if you nice about it," he said in a soothing tone of voice.

Miss Lula became upset. How you tell is, her voice shakes. Her bottom lip curls down. Her cheeks, which are all most all ways pale, of course, get a mottled blush on them. "Suspicion of whut?" she said.

Detective Willy Wilson turned and winked at Officer Sloane. Then he turned a little further and winked at me, smiling the while. At last he turned back to Miss Lula and said, "I just want to talk to you, is all."

"Whut for?" Miss Lula said, and she stamped one of her feet. I do not recall which one. Tear drops rolled down to her cliff cheeks and dripped off one at a time.

Detective Willy Wilson shook his head once and produced a pair of hand cuffs. Where upon his person they had been residing, I do not know. "Whut for?" he repeated with a mocking sound. "You kidding, missy?" he said. He jerked his head once in the direction of the curb, meaning to indicate his friend, I suppose. "It's a long list," he said.

I saw Miss Lula relax, then. I relaxed all so. If it was a list, it was not Miss Isabel. She put out her two arms, fists curled, to be hand cuffed. Detective Willy Wilson said, "No need of that."

His friend called, "Why you so nice to her?"

"I all ways nice to a lady," Detective Willy Wilson said. Miss Lula looked at him. Her eye lashes were primped by her tears in to tiny tufts, like paint brushes. She sniffed. "Put your hands down," Detective Willy Wilson said, so she did. She kept her drippy eyes on him, and her lip continued to tremble. Detective Willy Wilson let a long breath go out his nostrils. "Okeh," he said in a low voice, and he nodded at the door. "Inside," he said. With out turning to look at me, he said, "You too." Once we were in side, he said, "May I sit?"

"Go on," said Miss Lula.

He sat on my sleeping divan and said, "You sit too." I shut the door. "And you too," he said, so, we did. Miss Lula sat on a sofa chair she kept in that parlor. I sat next to her on the floor. Detective Willy Wilson slowly shook his head, once left, once right. That was from our point of view. From his particular point of view, he slowly shook his head, once right, once left, of course. He looked at Miss Lula for, I should say, the duration of four or five breaths, if you are breathing calmly. We were not breathing that way, how ever. He leaned forward, then, and said in a confiding sort of tone of voice, "My friend Sloane out there is a pisser, you know. Rough, uneducated sort of fellow, not like the three of us n'heah. You got him at your door step, pissing in a Coke™ bottle all night, seven nights a week." His own breaths came faster, now, and his nostrils were flaring with every one. "He doan like it a bit," he continued. "He may not be educated the way some people are," he said. "But he is a clean fellow," he said. "He don't do dirt the way some people do," he said. "So he doan appreciate having to piss in no God damn Coke™ bottle seven nights every week to keep Gum cleaned of dirt, as some people in this city are, you know," Detective Willy Wilson said. He held Miss Lula's gaze with his flaming one. Then he sighed. He leaned back on the divan. He lifted his base ball hat and combed his hair with his long, thick, blunt fingers. "Now," he said, "tell me true. Why are the two a you soaking wet?" Miss Lula glanced down at me. Detective Willy Wilson followed her eyes. "Don't look at him, missy. Look at me," he said.

"Skinny dipping," I said. He looked at me, then. I saw that the whites of his eyes were rather yellow, or, red and yellow. They were blood shot, like tabasco sauce on

runny eggs. I was reminded of Antimorpheus and so on. "We was skinny dipping at the lake," I said.

Detective Willy Wilson snorted. "Is that so?" he said.

I said, "Uh huh."

"You must have some of us Wilsons' hidden charms," he said.

I did not understand him, so I said, "I do not understand you." Miss Lula shut her eyes.

"Any drugs in this house?" said Detective Willy Wilson.

"What kind?" I said, and Miss Lula moaned with her face in her hands.

"Don't shit me, cousin," said Detective Willy Wilson. "I smell it," he said. "What you do, have a party?" he said. He looked around. "Or do you sty pigs in here," he said. He smiled slightly and touched his base ball hat bill. "No offense, missy," he said.

"None taken," Miss Lula said. Suddenly, she and Detective Willy Wilson were both laughing. Laughing their heads off.

Then Detective Willy Wilson shut his grin, as you might shut a lamp. "Costs Gum plenty to keep Sloane pissing in his bottle every night. More than you make in your dirty business, I trow," he said. "Why don't you take your dirty business to some other place, missy," he said. "Save us the money," he said. He stood up and looked around. "I don't have a warrant," he said. "Save me the trouble and get out," he said. Then, he got out him self.

Chapter 45

Do not read on a full stomach.

As soon as Detective Willy Wilson was gone, Miss Lula said, "We kilt her. Fuck." She covered her face with her delicate long fingers and silently wept. Then she took in her breath, as you might do in your sleep, quite suddenly, after you have not been breathing for a while. It is a sort of corrugated, backward retch sound. It is a terrible gasp of horror, would be an other way to put it. She followed up that sound with a foreward retch sound. Then, she in fact retched. Up came all her party food, which, it was olives, canapes, tea biscuits, potato chips, and so on, most of it fairly well recognizable as it flew by me in a muddy spout of vomit. There fore, I recognized it. As you know, vomit is contagious, as laughter is, and yawns, and panic. You will at times vomit your self, if you detect an other's vomit. At least, you will do it, if I am you. When I detected Miss Lula's vomit, it stung the in side of my nose with an acid odor, and my own peristaltic actions came in to reverse. My in sides pumped one pain full contraction. No thing came up, how ever. The reason was, I had not been eating much for a week or so prior to that party. I did not eat much for a week or so after it, either. The further reason was, I was at the bottom of the well of my love sickness. I had lost my appetite, as people do in that situation. It hurt, how ever. Nausea spiraled my mind. I saw black spots. Let me warn you. You will some times vomit, if you just read about vomit. Best you not read this on a full stomach.

Chapter 46

Questions.

My new cousin and my name sake, namely, Detective Willy Wilson, came back again the very next day. "I have some questions," he said. We were all three standing in the parlor. "Offer me a seat, why don't you," he said, so Miss Lula offered him one with a hand wave. It was the middle of the day, and she had her clothes on, and I had my clothes on, and Detective Willy Wilson did too. Those were all ordinary getting around kind of clothes, sneakers and dry blue jeans and dry shirts and so on. We had on no night gowns or slippers or under wear, except for the under wear under neath our get around clothes, of course. In other words, every thing was right and proper. It seemed to me, how ever, that Detective Willy Wilson looked straight through our clothes, straight at our filthy hearts. He sat his large body, which, it was dressed this time in a fine white summer suit and a pale pink shirt and a pale green tie, in the biggest chair. It was a blue chair, and it had coronets and flowers sewed on its slip cover. That was a scuffed up slip cover, which, it smelled like cat pee, for this reason. Cats pee on it. He wrinkled his nose once. A detective must have a fine sense of smell, I trow. Then he said, "Cat pee," just like that. I was impressed. He looked at the cracked old walls, which, they were painted in a fairly new coat of white, how ever. He looked at a picture in a frame on the wall of an old man. "Who's that?" he said.

"That whut you want to ask of me?" said Miss Lula.

Detective Willy Wilson smiled a false smile. He had the most brilliant teeth. "I ain't done you nothing yet, missy. Take warning," he said.

"It's my daddy," Miss Lula said. "He a dentist," she said.

"Oh is it? Is he?" I said, for I was surprised. It was a round and cheer full fellow in that picture. I was not surprised that he was round or that he was cheer full. I was surprised that he was a dentist.

"What, are you here?" Detective Willy Wilson said to me. I stood to go. "Stay there," he said, so I sat down again. "Ain't you heard of sarcasm?" Detective Willy Wilson said.

"No, sir," I said, for I was nervous, and so I spoke like an idiot. I am not one, as I have mentioned.

"Lie number one," Detective Willy Wilson said. "Unless you just stupid," he said.

"I ain't, sir," I said.

He stared. "Chee, what have we here. Someone's shittin' his pants. Call me cuz, cuz. Relax," he said. He looked at the picture some more. He looked around at the walls. "I've seen these walls," he said.

I did not ask where he had seen them. So, I did not reply to that remark. However, Miss Lula said, "Where you seen 'em?" That was an other instance of sarcasm. I know it when I hear it, you see.

Detective Willy Wilson focused his priorly unfocused eyes on her, and retracted those eyes' eye lids, so that what you saw was the whites of those eyes, and little dark blue irises in the middle of them, and two pin points of black in the middle of those two blue irises. Those were pupil pin points, of course. "Behind the blood that's on them," he

said. "Big Jackson Pollock spatters," he said. He heaved a sigh and trembled ever so slightly. Then he turned at me and winked. "See, cuz, I'm educated, just like you," he said. "You painted it over, didn't you?" he said.

"Not me," I said.

"Not I," he said.

"Not I," I said, merely to obey and to mollify him.

Miss Lula said, "Are these the questions?"

"Don't you want to know about it?" Detective Willy Wilson said. "I been in this house before," he said.

"Small world," she said.

He said, "Not that small."

"Meaning whut?" she said.

Detective Willy Wilson shook his head. "That was going to be my fuyst question," he said. "You tell me," he said.

"Tell you whut?" said Miss Lula, but he only stared at her, so she looked away.

He said, "Answer me."

"Answer you whut?" she said.

"I'm full up with your style of shilly shally," Detective Willy Wilson said. "I ain't even ast you my good ones yet, so kindly don't shit me, missy," he said. He sighed another once. "I don't know. Am I wasting my time? You want your lawyer? We could go to the office if you do," he said. "I could get our lawyer there too, and then we could have a fair old cock fight," he said. He turned to me, then. "And whut about you, cuz. You want a lawyer or you want to do this nicely," he asked me.

"I painted them," I said.

Detective Willy Wilson shook his head. "Lie number two, then. Cousin, you some liar," he said. "I tell your pap, what will he say," he said.

"It ain't a crime, is it?" I said.

Detective Willy Wilson scuffled forward two or three little steps in the big blue chair, which, it brought him, and, consequently, his face, closer to my face, which, my particular face was on the divan opposite that chair. He said, "Now less see, ain't whut a crime. Tell me a lie? Bet on it. Paint a wall? Depends. To spoil evidence of a murder? Then of course. To cut open some poor ole customer of your'n for his fuckin' wallet? Surely."

I said, "I ain't cut open a customer. "

My new cousin slapped one of his knees, and barked, or hooted, or snorted at me. I do not recall. All so, I do not recall which knee.

"Leave him alone," Miss Lula said.

"What about a dog?" said my cousin.

"Whut about one?" Miss Lula said.

"Not you," my cousin said. "Him," he said, and he swaggered his noggin in my own direction.

"Whut," I said.

Detective Willy Wilson said to me, "Ever you cut open a dog. No lies, now."

I was indignant. So I said indignantly, "Whut are you talking about?"

That cousin of mine put one of his index fingers up to one of the sides of his nose. Which side, the left one or the right one, I do not recall either. I infer that it was the same

side as the finger. It would have been a more thought full gesture an other way, and it was not thought full. All so, it would have been odd gesture an other way, and it was not odd. It was sly. I recall it. So, I have inferred it. That new cousin I had said, "No law you have to like a dog, cuz."

I said, "I do, though."

Detective Willy Wilson closed his eyes and wagged that noggin he had left to right to left, or, right to left to right. I do not remember which. Then he opened those eyes he had.

"I do so," I said.

"I hear different," he said, and I was amazed.

"I am amazed," I said. "Who said it?" I said.

Miss Lula Smith said, "Don't tell me you investigating a complaint of animal cruelty."

Detective Willy Wilson said, "No ma'am." Then he said, looking at the ceiling, "I believe there is no law against cruelty in this fair city of ours."

"Whut you ask that for, then?" Miss Lula said.

"Who said it?" I asked again, all though, not literally, of course. It was different words this time. I asked it at the same time that Miss Lula asked what she asked, so we asked together.

Detective Willy Wilson stretched. Then he cracked his knuckles. This is how he did it. He interlocked his fingers. He straightened his arms. He locked his elbows. Now, his palms were at us. His eyes closed. His lips pursed. Then, crack. It was like popcorn popping. He sighed then, and his eyes opened, and he seemed to settle in to that big

chair. After he was done cracking his knuckles, he rubbed his hands together, like a man ready to eat his delicious meal. He said, "Cousin Willy."

So, I said, "Yes sir."

"You will kick a dog now and then," he said.

I knew what he was talking about at last, so I said, "I know whut you are talking about at last." I was scared, of course. I did not say some thing about that.

He did say some thing about it, how ever. He said, "I got you going yet?"

I said, "No."

"Lie number three. You out," he said.

"I never kicked a dog. I do not do that," I said.

Detective Willy Wilson frowned. "You know what I'm talking about, but you don't do it," he said. "Dog," he said, and he scratched his hair. Rather, he scratched his scalp under neath that hair, of course.

"It is a misunderstanding," I said. My new cousin looked at me, waiting for more words, so I obliged him. I said, "May be that, in the dark, I tripped on one. They could not see. They were on the other side of the door. So how do they know?"

"Who know?" my new cousin said, like a bull dog him self, which, it has snapped its jaws down on some poor old rabbit.

I said, "Miss Brown. Reverend Beauson."

Now if a bull dog could smile, after he chomps down on a poor helpless rabbit, he would smile the way that new cousin of mine smiled then. "Oh, you know Miss Brown and Reverend Beauson?" he said.

I looked at Miss Lula, who, she was looking at the floor with a stricken look. It is a nice old hard wood floor.

"Don't look at her, cuz. Look at me," Detective Willy Wilson said at that time. So, I looked at him. "You know Reverend Beauson?" he said.

I said, "Sure I do."

"And Miss Brown?" he said.

I wanted to look over at Miss Lula. However, I didn't. "I know her," I said.

"That's Miss Isabel Brown and Reverend Alistair Beauson," he said. I nodded and looked at my feet. They are just plain, ordinary feet. However, they are not that fellow's eyes. It was my main consideration at that moment. "What's so interesting about your feet?" he said, so I gave up and looked at his eyes again.

"You know her too?" he said, to Miss Lula, this time, what though, he did not remove his gaze from me to look at her. She did not look at him, either. She did nod, however. "Well now," said Detective Willy Wilson. "I knew it already, I was just looking for lie number four," he said. "Oo, missy. What is worrying you?" he said.

"What is it about, then?" Miss Lula said.

"I ast you fuyt," said Detective Willy Wilson.

"I ain't worried," said Miss Lula.

"That's four," Detective Willy Wilson said. "Or, are you deceiving me in concert, or not? Three and one, then," he said. Addressing his next remark to me, he tapped his forehead. "It's a deep dark art, detecting murder," he said. At that juncture, I was just terrified. I had the physiological symptoms. I will not go in to them, for this reason. I have gone in to them. "She ain't worried, but you are," my new cousin said. "You

terrified. Ain't you cuz," he said. "You have all the symptoms and I am a deep dark murder detecting artist, you know," he said. He scuttled fore ward in the chair a stitch. His further remarks, he whispered. "I am terrified myself, talking with puysons like you two. Puysons like you, they hardly humans," he said. "They demons," he said. "Taking a human life, and all like that. Demons and devils, the two a you," he said. "At least you scared," he whispered. He said, "She hain't scared. She says she hain't. What do you think of that, cuz. A woman takes her own friend's life, and she hain't scared about it. It hain't a human being's way, cousin Willy. Step away from the dark side, cuz, and tell me 'bout her wicked ways. Step back in the light."

"You find her?" Miss Lula said after all that.

Detective Willy Wilson turned his gaze to her at last. Time ticked by. My heart beats were the ticks. Thud and thud, my heart tocked and ticked. "Who said she was lost?" Detective Willy Wilson said.

"Is she lost?" said Miss Lula.

"Is she?" that detective said.

"How should I know?" said Miss Lula.

"How was she the last time you saw?" said Detective Willy Wilson.

Miss Lula said, "Pretty good."

"Pretty good?" that detective said. "Will you care to be more specific?"

"Pretty good, that's all. We had a party," Miss Lula said.

"Oh, you had a party," said Detective Willy Wilson. Miss Lula fired a hating look his way. That detective waved at her. "There there," he said. "Don't you remember? I detected that party," he said.

Miss Lula said, "That's the last time we saw her. Wasn't it, Willy?"

My new cousin said, "Leading the witness, your honor."

I said, "Miss Lula, he ain't believe a word we saying."

Detective Willy Wilson said, "Ha ha ha," like that. He did not laugh, indicated by me in the conventional way by "ha ha ha." He just pronounced those syllables, "ha ha ha." Then he said, "Don't you worry on it," and he really did laugh, between his coughs. He coughed a bit, he wheezed a bit, and he laughed a bit. "You don't have to worry on it," he said again, all though, of course, you should not take my use of the word "again" literally, for the reason I indicated last time. "Nothing to worry about," he said a third time, with my usual qualifications. "Neither one a you could throw a cat off a bridge," he said. "It was her nigger. I mean, her knee grow. Wasn't it?" he said. Phonetically, that is how he said it. Sarcastically, it is all so how he said it. As I have told you, how ever, I have thrown a cat that way. That new cousin was wrong about it.

Chapter 47

More of them.

"Don't use that word in here," Miss Lula said.

"Wasn't it him, though?" said Detective Willy Wilson.

Miss Lula waved her head in negative directions. "Get out my house," she said.

My new name sake and new cousin slapped his knees. He stood, then. "His word against your'n, that what you want?" he said. "We get a Negro jury"—and here he tipped an invisible hat that he had on at Miss Lula—"what you gone do?" he said.

I said, "He say we did it?"

"Shut up, Willy," said Miss Lula to my self. "Now you get out of here," said she to my new cousin. She made a wave of shoo at him with the backs of her hands.

Detective Willy Wilson raised his eye brows. "Did what, exactly?" he said. I did not tell him. "Did what?" he said again. I did not tell him again, either. "Where is she? Where you put her?" he said.

Miss Lula stomped one foot and said, "He didn't put her anywhere, and neither did I, and now you get out, and Willy, you keep quiet," she said.

"Whom are you speaking to?" that detective said. He said it in a roguishly humorous manner, of course.

"Just out," Miss Lula said.

That detective said, "Pore Miss Dee wants her mother."

I sucked in my breath, for this reason. We had made an orphan of Miss Dee Light Brown. It is my second worst ill deed, or, it is the same ill deed as my very first worst ill

deed, which it was, we had made Miss Dee Light Brown's mother lose all her qualities, of course. If either of my two assistant professor friends were near by, I should ask one of them, or the other of them, or, perhaps, both of them, which one it was. They are not near by, how ever. They are south of here.

Miss Lula spoke to that new cousin of mine in her growl voice. "Whey is she?" she growled.

That detective cousin covered his mouth, just to cover his roguish smile, I trow. "Now you know I don't know, or why'd I be asking?" he said.

Miss Lula stomped again and curled up her fists. "Don't fuck with me," she said.

That detective showed her his palms and his ten fingers and said, "Easy does it if you don't want trouble. And if you want some, I'll bring some."

"Whey is she?" said Miss Lula an other time. She did not growl it as much that time as she did the last time. She did not growl it at all, in a matter of fact. She whined it, or she wheedled it, or she pleaded it, I should say.

"Oh," said that detective. "Whey is Dee? She fine," he said.

"Fine where?" said Miss Lula. This time, she was not talking as much in her mountain tone of voice. So I am giving you the differing phonetics.

Detective Willy Wilson said, "She at the neighbor lady's. I don't have her name, exactly."

"Missus Beam?" said Miss Lula.

"That's her," my new cousin said.

"All right, now you get out," said Miss Lula. "Please," she said.

Detective Willy Wilson smiled at her. "That's the way," he said, and he walked to the door. He had to tuck down to get under the lintel. Until I met that fellow, I was not aware that any people so large had ever fit in to our family. May be that they ate some different food on his particular side, or married larger people, or grew that large for some other reason. On my side, the people all married other people as small as they were themselves, apparently, or, they ate smallness inducing food, perhaps. I am not a genetic scholar. I am not a nutrition scholar. I am an elliptic curves scholar. There are heights in it. It is an other sort of height, how ever. I am going to slur over the details. That was a height side track. Here is the main track again. Detective Willy Wilson said, "Be good, you two." He winked at me. Then he got out, just as Miss Lula had asked him to do.

She went to the parlor window and peeked out from behind the curtain until my new cousin's car pulled off. It is a frilly white curtain. You can see through it. There fore, she had no practical reason to sneak around it that way. She sneaked for no practical reason, in other words. She sneaked for some other reason, in other words. "Less go," she said. It is her phonetics for "Let's go," of course.

Chapter 48

How you get to Crow Hollow.

We took Kleagle to the Crow Hollow exit in Assistant Professor Louis Morse's old car Pegasus, which, it was Miss Lula's old car Pegasus now, of course. I am giving you the driving directions, just as though this were a detective story. The reason is, this is a detective story. The further reason is this. There is a detective in it, so I am giving you those directions. Get on to Kleagle in town. For an example, you can get on where it crosses Stonewall Jackson. Take Kleagle south. Get off at the Crow Hollow exit. It has a crow sign. I have noticed after the fact that the next passage is a side track, so I am going to set it off.

Here I am, on the side track. "Crows" is what sign makers in the land of Amazon call our corbies. It is what the other people in this land of Arctica, where I am residing at present, call our corbies too. A crow, or a corbie, or a crow and a corbie, is, or are, painted on that sign. Sign makers do not spend unnecessary words on Crow Hollow people. Crow Hollow People is a euphemism in the land of Amazon. In the land of Amazon, those people are not called black people. They are generally not even called some less polite term or terms, in that land, if a reference to crows will do in stead. I shall not mention that term or those terms at this time. I have mentioned it or them all ready. Further more, a picture of a crow was generally preferred, in the land of Amazon, when I resided in that particular land, to a word for crow, when referring to those people and that place. Here is the end of the side track.

It is not two birds painted on that sign. It is just a single bird on that sign. Once you are on the Crow Hollow exit, take a left on to the under pass. You are on Black Quill Drive. It is named for a certain sachem called Black Quill. I might tell you about him later. Drive under Kleagle on that drive. You will come to Lesser Coverts Culvert. It is a long way. Make sure you have enough gas. Make a right. You can not make a left at that culvert any way, for this reason. There is no left. Now, it gets bumpy. It is down a hill, so, make sure of your brakes, or, get out and walk. It will be an other mile or so, through a glade, or a grove, of shade trees. It is not a glade. It is a grove. I have just looked those words up in the Funk & Wagnalls College "Standard" Dictionary of the English Language, 1946, so I know. If you are wearing sun glasses, you might as well take them off. It is dark in there. At the end of that grove, at last, comes the genuine glade. If it is a sunny day, you might want to put your sun glasses back on at that time. Here is when you might do it. When your eyes are sensitive. If your eyes are insensitive, it will not be too bad, even with out your sun glasses. With out your sun glasses, you might notice more items any way, such as spider webs, diamond bright across your path. I my self enjoy to notice such items. I do not know what you enjoy, of course. Who are you? It is the reason. When you have noticed all the items you are going to notice, you are at the bottom of the bumpy road. You are all so at the end of that glade. You are standing in front of two houses. The one on your left is shabby, small, and gray. The one on your right is shabby, small and gray as well. They have brick chimneys that smoke now and then. They do not now and then have brick chimneys. They have brick chimneys that now and then smoke. They are broken down, charred chimneys. They are missing bricks. Those missing bricks remind you of missing teeth, if you are I. How ever, you do

not want, particularly, to roll your tongue in the empty spots. You could not reach them. It is a jest, of course. If you are going to see Missus June Beam, you want the house on your right in that glade. If you are going to see Miss Isabel, you do not want either house in that glade, of course. Before Miss Lula and I drowned her, if you were going to see Miss Isabel, then, you would have wanted the house on your left in that glade. After we drowned her, she was not in that house, of course. May be that her ghost was in it. All of her that was earthly had mortified. Those are the directions.

Chapter 49

Music of a flute.

Music of a flute sounded in that glade. White sun light peeked in and out between leaves amongst the branches high up at the edge. Swathes of penny royal covered the earth and trembled in a breeze that was making sway those leaves. You might have thought that they swayed to the melody, if you had a fantastic turn of mind. I my self have, or had, no such turn of mind. In the glade, I did not think such a thought. It is my speculation upon your own turn of mind. I can not help your thoughts. I could not help Miss Lula's thoughts, either. She turned off the motor of Pegasus, looked out the window, and said, "Here be pucks."

I said, "Ought you have more sense."

"Hear that faun's playing," she said.

I thought that she was probably troubled in her fantasies on account of the recent events, so, "You are troubled by the recent events," I said.

"That's a faun anyhow," she said. At that time, the Reverend Alistair Beason appeared in the door way of Miss Isabel's house. He is even more tall than Detective Willy Wilson, so he stooped. The first item you notice, when you notice Reverend Alistair Beason, is his great height. The next one is his great beauty. Some actors are going to be beautiful, of course. It is often one of their stocks in trade, as you surely know, who ever you are. The Reverend Alistair Beason is an actor who, he had that particular stock. He had the largest, most soul full dark brown eyes, and long, curly dark

brown hair, and long brown lips, and a long brown nose to match those other long brown features of his visage. If he were a pirate, I should have called him the nick name Long Brown Alistair, or a like nick name. He is not one, however, so I do not call him that nick name, or a like nick name. In his right hand, the Reverend Alistair Beauson had his pan pipes, which, they were four or five long brown wooden pipes, strapped together. "I told you," said Miss Lula. For some reason, or for some other reason, an extraordinary pain cut my gut at that particular time. Miss Lula turned her look away from the Reverend Alistair Beauson. She glanced at me with her sharp blue eyes. Some times, her eyes are soft blue eyes. Some times, they are sharp blue eyes. This time, her eyes were sharp blue eyes. "I read your mind," she said. She said it to rhyme with reed, not red. I am just telling you.

I knew that she read my mind, so I said, "I know it," of course. My particular read, in that particular sentence, rhymes with red.

Miss Lula said, "You thinking 'bout my twat day and night."

"You too," I said.

She grabbed my hair, then, and yanked me right and left, hard enough to hurt. So, it hurt. "That's - whut - I - think - a - you," she said whiles she yanked me. That is five hyphens for five yanks. Punch and Judy might fight as we did, if we were puppets. This is how we did it. She yanked me. After that she yanked me, a clump of my hair came away in her hands, and she brushed it off, looking disgusted. "Look whut you did," she said. My own particular hands stayed on my lap. Her cheeks flushed. I had not seen them do it before. Her two flushes looked like two red slap marks. The Reverend Alistair Beauson was watching from the door way all this time, moving his fingers on and

off his pan pipes pipe holes. "Alistair," said Miss Lula. At that time, he stepped from the doorway, back one step, in to the darkness. Pan pipe music started in again. "Shit," said Miss Lula. Miss Isabel's door swung shut. I am not sure it can be said that way, unless a ghost may own a door, perhaps. How else might I say it, I wonder. Miss Lula opened her own car's door, and hopped out of that car. She stepped over to Miss Isabel's ghost's door, if that is how I should say it, and tapped on it. The Reverend Alistair Beauson's pan pipe music stopped a second or two. It started in again, and Miss Lula tapped again. "Ssst. Ssst, Alistair," she said. His music stopped again, and that house door opened a crack this time. I could see his nose. Sun light was shining on it, is the reason. Miss Lula's hair shined in that sun light as well. Her hair was about even with his nose. Those two talked. I did not hear them. Then, this happened. The Reverend Alistair Beauson dropped his pan pipes and fell over. He pulled his knees in to his chest. He scratched his cheeks bloody. Now, two people had red cheeks. I do not know what color my own particular cheeks were at that time.

Chapter 50

I explain some thing.

Miss Lula was leaning over him, patting the Reverend Alistair Beauson's shoulder. He was shivering and shaking his head in a denying motion. He could not deny it, how ever. Some people are able to deny the terrible information, of course. For example, when my grand father died, his daughter, who, she was my mother, denied it. This is how. She went to sleep for three days. After that she woke up, she did not mention him. We all took the hint. We did not mention him either. It is an effective procedure, apparently. The Reverend Alistair Beauson did not know about this procedure, it seems. He was wide awake and staring at me from the dirt floor of the door way. He was not shaking his head any more. He climbed up with his pan pipes and walked over to me. Since he was so tall, he was looking down on me. Cuts were on his face. His eyes and his nostrils flared. He kicked my side's door of the car. Then he reared back and threw his pan pipes at my head. The window of Pegasus was closed, how ever, so his pan pipes bounced off that window.

The Reverend Alistair Beauson and I stared at each other. Both of us were panting. He made a twirl with one finger, which, as I understood it, it meant, roll down the window. I shook my head in my own denying motion and he twirled his finger another time. So, I rolled the window down. He stared at me a while. I could hear his panting. It went on that way a while. Then he turned and walked back to the house. Miss Lula was in the door way, still. She had been watching us whiles she bitten her left index finger. May be that she bit it to the bone. It was that bloody. The Reverend

Alistair Beauson went in the door and she reached for his right hand, which it was the hand with out pan pipes in it. The Reverend Alistair Beauson shook away her hand and disappeared in to the darkness. Then he re-appeared from the darkness and looked towards me. His eyes were red by this time.

He said, "Why'd you kick my dog?" His voice is deep and it resonates, even in an empty glade. It is just the voice for an actor, all so, for a minister, which, he is or was both, of course. I have mentioned it.

"I did not kick him," I said.

We looked in to each other's red eyes for a while. "She's a lady dog," he said. I saw that his eyes were red. I felt that my eyes were red.

I said, "It is a misunderstanding."

He looked at me a while longer. Then he turned in to the darkness again, shaking his head. Did it mean, I Do Not Believe You. Did it mean, he was amazed at my gall to tell such a lie. Or did it mean some thing else. The Reverend Alistair Beauson shut Miss Isabel's ghost's door.

I think about Miss Isabel.

Miss Lula sat back down in to the driver's seat and covered her face with her long fingers. She curled those fingers and scraped her cheeks with her finger nails. "That went fine, didn't it," she said. The door of the house next to Miss Isabel's ghost's house opened. "Missus Beam," said Miss Lula. That is Miss Dee Lite Brown's baby sitter's name. Missus June Beam was standing in the door way of that house, holding a wash rag. She was all so standing in a long black and white dress. The back ground of the dress was white. The polka dots of the dress were black. Why are they polka dots, I wonder. Do they portray a polka dance, perhaps in the manner of abstract art, or in some other manner, perhaps. Missus June Beam was further standing in her shoes. They were medium brown leather shoes, which they had tall wood heels. Missus June Beam was a medium large, medium brown woman, with white hair and young skin. Her eyes were medium large, and not round at all. Rather, they were crescent shaped, like crescent moons with the corners pointed down, as though her cheeks were all ways pushing up on them in a smile and making them point that way. The whites of her eyes, further more, were a medium milky brown, and the irises of those eyes were medium dark brown. Missus June Beam was medium all over. More over, Missus June Beam was a medium.

Here is how I knew it. Miss Lula said, "She a medium," whiles we looked at her through the window of Pegasus. Then, she waved at Missus June Beam. "Good day, isn't it, Missus Beam," she said. Missus Beam waved and smiled and frowned and blinked and stopped her smile. Then she clapped her apron on to her face. I did not tell

you about her apron. It was a scarlet one with frills. It did not match. "That apron doesn't match," said Miss Lula in one of her low voices. It was her dazed, shocked, low voice. Missus Beam howled through her scarlet apron. She slapped her ears. You can not slap your ears while you are holding your apron. So, naturally, her apron dropped, and we saw her face. Her eye brows were curled down ward towards her eyes and her eyes bulged towards us in a look of fury. Miss Lula shrank down behind the driver's wheel and said, "Ahhh, I told you." It is how I knew that Missus June Beam was a medium. At least, it is how I knew that she knew more than she had rights to. Miss Lula left the car and walked over to her. Miss Lula was not bouncing as she did usually. Hers was a flat footed walk that day. Missus June Beam stepped back and slammed her palms to her thighs and stamped her left foot. She threw a glance my way with her curled fist eye brows and stamped her foot an other time. I wished I could get away. I stayed where I was, how ever. The reason is this. I could not get away. Miss Lula picked up Missus June Beam's hands in her own hands and talked to her. Tears rolled down both their cheeks. Miss Lula and Missus June Beam went in to the house. I sat where I was, listening, but all I heard was some forest sounds. The glade was in a grove. Because that it was a forest grove, the sounds in that glade were forest sounds. I heard several bird songs of different kinds. One had two syllables, first one high, next one low. An other one was a weave of trills and rasps. Another one was the hoot of the Amazon Owl. The Amazon Owl is an enormous creature. Its wings span twelve feet. It ranges over Misery Swamp and the Spirit Mountains. It preys on lizards, possums, squirrels, sea gulls, rock doves, wild cats, and house cats. It will supplement that diet with other animals when lizards, possums, squirrels, sea gulls, rock doves, wild cats, and house cats are in short

supply. For an example, it is the only bird in the land of Amazon that hunts people. It will pluck out your eyes. A corbie will peck out the eyes of a man or woman or child, if he or she or it is dead, lying down in the dirt, having his or her or its dead stare at the sky. The Amazon Owl will not eat of the all ready dead, how ever. It is too noble, but if you are alive, and you happen still to have your eyes, it will hurl its self at you, talons front, and pluck out those eyes of yours, whiles you fleeing at a dead run, and feast on your eyes in the middle of the air whiles you weep out all of your blood. You will be dead eventually that way. I covered my eyes. I thought of Miss Isabel. I thought of her hair floating on Dammed Lake in the moon light. Was it the finger nail, real moon, or was it the full, impossible moon. Was she giving the moon her dead stare. May be that she could not any more. They corbies in that swamp. I thought of the eye sockets of Miss Isabel, red and empty.

Chapter 52

An unexpected event.

Missus June Beam came back and said, "Come in here," so I uncovered my eyes, got out of that car, and went to her. She was taller than I am. I went to pass in to her rooms, but she caught my hand. I turned to face her, and a certain item happened to me. I did not expect it, or even know about it. That is to say, it was not like some items you have heard about, or read about, or seen on television or some where else, which, you have not, how ever, done them, or had them done to you. For an example, killing a person, or getting your self killed by that person. For some other examples, having carnal knowledge of a person, or marrying, or divorcing that person. Those are items you know about. You see them on a television, or hear about them some where. You might expect, or hope, or fear of them, though they have not yet been part of you. The item that passed between me and Missus June Beam, I never heard about such an event. It is not in books I have read. It is in some other books, perhaps. I have not read those books. May be that you have read those books. I do not know your books. Well, you are reading this one. Now you will know some thing about it . You may not understand it by reading what I write about it, how ever. The reason is this. I do not understand it. If you do understand it, I would appreciate your letting me know. I do not have email here, but your enveloped letter, addressed to MSFPC Arctica Trust and properly stamped, ought to find me. I enjoy a letter now and then. Only, please do not send me contraband, such as politically or sexually suggestive messages, or politically or sexually any thing at all. I do not need the trouble. I have all I can take just to hide this writing. I will not tell you how I do it,

for this reason. Several here use the same wiles I do to hide their writings. If a turn key were to read my particular writings and discover those wiles, it would not only be my self that hangs, and I would be sorry for it. I will just give you one hint. I have become inured to standing naked in the snow.

Here is my unexpected event. When Missus June Beam caught my hand, it felt warm. It is not the event. It is the beginning of the event. After that my hand felt warm, I looked at her eyes, and my eyes felt warm. The warmness from her hand and her eyes came in to me as two streams. One through my own eyes. One through my own hands. The eye stream fell, like waters, towards my heart. The hand stream flowed up my arms, say, like lava, towards my heart. The eye waters stream and the hand lava stream met together in that heart and exploded like salvation. It is a physics metaphor, of course. It is all so a religion metaphor, of course. Consequently, I felt that I was saved. I felt that I was newly borne. So I bawled like a new born. In my bawlings I said, "Why are you saving me? It is nonsense." I meant that it was nonsense to think it, or to believe it, or even to speak of it. All so, that it was nonsense to save me any way. In deed those items are nonsense. So, I shall not speak of them further. We left Miss Dee Lite Brown in the care of Missus June Beam and went home.

Chapter 53

I sneak around.

Miss Lula had her operation at eight o'clock ante meridiem, on August ninth, at Amazon General Hospital in down town Gum. I was in a waiting room they had, for this reason. I was waiting. After that I waited, I sneaked around the hospital a while. Then I waited in the waiting room from ten o'clock ante meridiem until one o'clock post meridiem. Whiles I waited the first time, this is what I did. I read magazines. There was an old issue of Time Magazine with an article about the tall ships parade in New York Harbor. I had seen those ships whiles they sailed that harbor on Miss Lula's cable television, which, it was my very first sight of that television. It was different from usual television in the following regard. Reception. The tall ships in Time Magazine distracted me. This is what they distracted me from. My breath. My heart. My thoughts. Those ships cut back and forth on the glittering water, looking calm and dignified. I my self was not calm. I was not dignified either, for this reason. I was going to say the reason, but I have paused. You can not tell from your end that I have paused, of course. Never mind the reason. It is obvious. After that I looked at Time Magazine, I wanted an other such distraction. Other wise, there I would be, breathing hard, and coughing hard, and thinking hard thoughts. When my heart beats hard, I cough. When I have hard thoughts, it beats that way. When I think of blood on Miss Lula's mouth, I have those thoughts. When I see her blood on her mouth, I think of it, then. After I finished up Time Magazine, I did my sneaking around. It was then, then. I saw her. Two men in green clothes wheeled her on her gurney down a corridor from the operating room to the ward

where they put you to sleep it off. I saw her, my beloved person, wrapped in sheets as tight as a mummy. Her head stuck out one end, wrapped in a turban. A jar of clear fluid was hung over her head, and a tube was piping that fluid in to those sheets towards her. Some where in those sheets, Miss Lula's fluids and that tube's fluids were mingled. No thing of her could I see except her face. Her mouth is right in the middle of it, of course. That was when I saw her blood on her mouth. So, I all most retched. I did not retch, however. I ran. I ran down corridors, bumping in to walls. They were two tone walls. The top tone was light. The bottom tone was dark. I do not recall the colors. After a while, here I was in the waiting room again, wishing for an other distraction. They had a fish tank in there. To calm down waiting persons was the reason for it, of course. It is an other distraction. There fore, it is just what I was wishing for. There fore, I sat in a chair in front of the fish tank. It was a white plastic chair. It was a large fish tank. Bright lights made it stand out from the general back ground, which, it was a back ground of dim light. Five large gold fish were swimming. They were not really large. They were two or three inches long, but they were two or three times as large as the other fish in the fish tank, which, I can not tell you their names. I do not know their names. There were white ones, green ones, blue ones, and a striped one. It was violet stripes on a yellow scales back ground. They swanned around that tank, flaunting their filmy fins like flounces on ball gowns, or like filmy fans in the hands of young women, standing around at the margins of their ball in those gowns. I have indulged my self in an episode of alliteration. I hope it is all right with you. They stared at every thing with their eyes with out eye lids. They made kissing, smacking motions with their mouths with out lips, as if the fish tank water was delicious, like this. Mwah. Mwah. And they flaunted their filmy

fins. Those fins calmed me down, just as that they were supposed to do. The striped fish nipping the other fish was my only notion of disturbance for a while. For an example, one gold fish was strewing a thread of you know what from behind its ventral fin. Two green fish hovered under the gold fish to eat of it. The striped fish nipped and chased them, so that it could hover under there its self. It was not truly disturbing. It was some what disgusting, but it was, after all, a distraction. Any way, it was not as disgusting as the blood on Miss Lula's mouth. Most of the excitement in that fish tank had to do with food. Some of those fish kissed the sides of the tank with great passion to suck up any bit of food that they could find. Gazing on all of their fin flouncing and tank kissing was soothing. So, I was soothed. I gazed quite a while at all of those fish. Then I noticed a small white fish canted to an angle between some ferns. It would drift and correct, drift and correct, staccato style, about twice a second, I should say. None of the other fish was doing that motion. I checked. I saw a pair of other small white fish of the same variety, swanning and flouncing like all the other fish. All of their motions were slow and relaxed, except for the striped fish's motions, and except for this staccato fish's motions. My stomach tensed up. May be that it was sick, or dying. Its fins were gone. May be that it never had its fins. May be that it suffered a birth defect and it did all of its drifting and correcting to make up for its lack of fins, perhaps. I wished to believe it, but I did not. I believed that it was dying. It had small dark rings around its eyes, like rings around the eyes of a dying person. I felt that it was thrashing that way out of pain and suffering, and I felt badly for it. My heart beat started up again, like this. Thwack, thwack, thwack. I wondered, should I tell some one. Surely, I thought, they have a tank operator in this hospital to keep their tanks going. Other wise, the tank turns green, and

your fish end up flat dead on the surface. When I did my psychological fish research when I was ten years old, it is what happened to my own particular fish. They might have fish doctors around here, how ever, I thought, to take care of their unwell fish. Then I thought, No, they do not. It is too much to spend on fish. They scoop them out with a wire handle fish net and throw them in to the garbage. Then I thought of sick fish gasping to death in the garbage. It was a disturbing thought. So, I was disturbed. Then I heard a voice, say, "Mister Wilson?" I looked and saw a surgeon in the door way. How I could tell he was a surgeon was, the surgeon's mask that was under his chin. He had on various other surgical accessories, such as booties over his sneakers, and all blue clothing, and a blue shower cap that would have been strange to see, out side a shower, on any one else but a surgeon. He looked me up and down in the following way. It Can Not Be That Some One Like You Has A Girl Friend Like Her. I wanted to say, "She is not my girl friend," by way of an explanation. I did not say it, how ever. I just stood up with, as I imagine, a question on my face. The surgeon came over and offered his hand. He told me his name, which, I forget what it was. "Lula's fine," he said. I practically wilted, I was so relieved.

I said, "I saw blood on her just now."

The surgeon made me a sharp glance. It meant, I suppose, where did you see that? I did not tell him where, of course. I did not want to get a ticket for sneaking around. He said, "She did experience some difficulties."

"Whut?" I said.

He said, "After we took her off the ventilator, she seized on the table. Nothing we could have predicted. But she's all right. She really will be fine."

"How comes it that she had blood?" I said. The surgeon frowned.

"She bit her tongue a few times. Nothing we couldn't repair," he said.

"How many times exactly?" I said. I am all ways interested in the number of an item. The surgeon was not looking at my eyes any more. He was looking at the floor. It was a green linoleum floor with white swirls. After I knew that he was not answering, I said, "Do you know?" He mumbled some words, so I said, "Excuse me?"

That surgeon said, "She had twelve wounds." I was sick to my stomach when he said that, and pains crawled up my legs. I had hard thoughts. I passed through the heart beating and hard breathing items I have mentioned, and I began my coughing.

"I guess you sewed her tongue all up, though?" I said between my coughs.

He made a deep breath, such as a sigh is, and clasped my shoulder. "Yes sir," he said. "We sewed it right back on," he said.

I did not follow him. So I said, "I do not follow you."

The surgeon said, "Mister Wilson, I'm afraid she chopped off a bit of it," and he giggled.

At that time, I did not know what I could believe less, that she chopped off a bit of it, or that this fellow giggled. As a general matter, I feel younger than people, even if I am not younger. I felt older than this fellow, how ever. He seemed like a child, or an idiot. He was nervous, I imagine. I felt old all over.

Chapter 54

I stay awake.

Soon, it became apparent to me that I could get around the visiting rule of the Amazon General Hospital. The rule was this. "Visitors are permitted during Visiting Hours only." You could read it on the wall to the left of the door of the room of my beloved person, Miss Lula. It was printed on a card in a picture frame that hung on that wall. After the card said, "Visitors are permitted during Visiting Hours only," it gave you a list of those visiting hours. They were these. Each day, ten o'clock to twelve o'clock, ante meridiem, then two o'clock to five o'clock, post meridiem, then seven o'clock to nine o'clock, post meridiem. I should say it was a reasonable distribution of visiting hours, if you wanted to reason about it. I did not want to. What I wanted was to stay in Miss Lula's room all day. I was all right with leaving it once in a while. For an example, to use a public toilet. They had one of each kind on every floor. I only needed one kind, of course. For an other one, to dash out to the stair case and down that stair case to the cafeteria, to purchase a bowl of soup, which, it might be cloying tomato soup, or salty pea soup, or greasy potato soup. Then to spoon up that soup, then, to dash back up the stair case. You can find your own examples by substitution of a variety of consumables for the bowl of soup, such as, a package of dried out Saltine™ crackers, or a package of stale Oreos™ cookies, or a sandwich of old egg salad and a leaf of lettuce with browned edges and two slices of well preserved white bread, or a wax carton of soured chocolate flavored milk, or a similar carton of rancid orange juice. I all so wanted to stay in my beloved person Miss Lula's hospital room all night. The hospital police would not let me

break that particular rule. I had to stay out from midnight until six o'clock, ante meridiem. The first night Miss Lula was in there, I argued with one of them about it, but he would not give in. When I pleaded insistently on staying over, he put one of his hands on his revolver handle and said, "Shut up and walk away, and you won't get in any trouble." I studied his revolver a second or two, and then I walked away. He called after me, "Don't come back." I thought he wanted me to turn and sass him, or to say some thing else spontaneous. Then he might gun me down in a law full homicide for offering resistance to a peace officer. I did not take his bait. I went home and came back when his shift was done, which, it was the next morning at six o'clock, ante meridiem of course. In this wise, I established how far I could go breaking rules. It was far enough. I might find my self looking at a silhouette in the corridor's light of a nurse peeking in at me after the hours visiting was permitted. She might shake her head, but that was as far she would take it. I left midnights. I could not look at Miss Lula whiles I was asleep any way.

Other wise, I stayed looking at her, night and day. I admit that she was not much to see. Excepting her face, she was just a long tube of bandages, and her face was not as beautiful, then, as it was before. Her lips were swelled shut and purple. Her eyes were swelled shut as well, and they had bruises around them of the same violet hue. When she licked her lips, I shut my own eyes. If looking at my beloved person was a reliable guide to the question, a tongue with knots of cat gut sewed in it is not what I should like to see on any one, let alone on her. I became terribly tired, sitting next to her in my plastic chair. Back at the house, I was not getting much sleep. She was not there. Master Joshua Oleander was not there. Tom the tom cat was not there any more, either. It was

just my self, and the cat clock wagging its tail and its eyes, and one or two mice in the dark of the kitchen. I could hear the skit skat of their tiny feet in the crumbs on the floor. I lay on the divan wrapped in a blanket at night, watching car lights go by on the parlor window curtain. Once in while, I would peek out of it and see Officer Sloane gobbling a hot dog, or a dough nut, or sipping of his mug of coffee, in his car parked at the fence gate. He was the only human I knew to talk to and his face was green. The reason his face was green, was this. Green dash board lights. I talked to the mice, but I suppose they did not listen to me. I did not want to talk to Officer Sloane.

Once I did, though. I traipsed out there in my slippers and knocked on the passenger side window. Officer Sloane looked straight ahead, munching. His head was looked all most hydrocephalic, it was so large, and his hair was short. He him self was short, but it did not show, for these reasons. That he was sitting. That his head was so large. I said, "She ain't here," right through the window, which it was rolled up shut.

Officer Sloane appeared to be surprised, or pretended to be surprised, at the sight of me. He leaned across and rolled the window down and said, "What can I do you for, citizen?"

I said, "You might as well go home. She ain't here."

He said, "You're here, though, ain't you."

It frightened me that he said that. I hurried back in to the house and locked the door. I slid down in to my blanket and looked at the prowl car lights shine on the wall. I could see the stains through the many coats of paint I had slapped on it to propitiate Miss Lula after that I moved in. They were all ready covered with white paint when I got there, but you could see them through it. So I covered them with some more white paint,

but you could see them still. Then I covered them with yellow paint, and that was all right for a week or so. After a week or so, how ever, the stains came through. Finally Miss Lula came home one day with a pail of blood red paint, and I covered the wall with that color. The stains came right through it in the dark color of blood clots. Those stains were an other item to disturb my sleep. They were in a star burst above some vertical streaks. I kept on imagining how they might have got there in the first place, and I did not like it. It made me think. This is what I thought. Do not buy your house from a crook. Then I thought, she is a crook her self. Then I had an other thought. So am I. It kept me awake.

Chapter 55

My particular thought.

After some days, some nurses unwrapped Miss Lula and let her come home with me. No one was there else us. So her care fell my way, which, it did not look or smell beautiful. I was trucking bed pans and wiping places not of my own body. I did not mind it, though. I delighted in it. That delight was not lust full delight, for this reason. It was filthy foul work. This was my thought, how ever. There is more than one way to make love to a person. During some circumstances that came to pass, my heart squeezed joy fully, and I wept joy full tears, even whiles I gagged and imprecated my vile oaths. Miss Lula did mind it, how ever. For the first week that she was at home, she could not speak with her bit off tongue. How ever, her facial motions and others of her bodily motions spoke for her. Such as these. Whiles I do my wiping, she looks away and weeps her self.

After that week, she could speak with her tongue once more. Then I told her my thought, in case that it might ease her feelings. I thought that it was awe fully poetic. For instance, you will, I should think, agree that it was more poetic than, There Is More Than One Way To Skin A Cat. All so, it was more poetic than, There Is More Than One Way to Make Johnnie Cakes, or, There Is More Than One Way To Pluck A Duck, as it seemed to me. In the case that you do not know it, plucked ducks come in to it from that well known comedy record album of the day, which, Mister Louis Morse and Mister Henry Shine and I used to listen to that record album in New York City, whiles those other two smoked their doobies. Then later on, Assistant Professor Louis Morse and Assistant

Professor Henry Shine and Miss Lula and I used to listen to the very same record album down there in Gum City, whiles those other three smoked their particular doobies. Now here I was at Miss Lula's bed side, spooning her up my hot broth of chicken, and she says, "Pluck a duck, Willy. I don't like to owe you so many favors."

So I say, "Naws, I owe you them." Then, I tell it to her.

At that she raises her eye brows, puckers her lips, and breathes a long breath through her nose. She whispers this. "That's whut I'm afraid of." It came from her ruefully, as I felt it. I was abashed, but I made it that I was not abashed. I kept on offering her spoons of my broth, and she kept on sipping of them. I brazened it out.

Chapter 56

A Gummian night.

You will not grasp my comparison to follow, with out you have heard of the beauteous Scheherezade, and the Thousand Arabian Nights, and the other Arabian Night. She tells stories to her prince so he will forget his bad intentions. Some places, you can not make them forget their intentions any more. They will cut off your head, what ever you might say. You could still make me forget mine down in Gum, how ever. I was not even a prince, but only a pauper. Making just the regular love with one such as I am would have been as bad as all that, I trow, for Miss Lula, my beloved person. She told me her particular stories to keep me out of her hair and her other parts. It is a sour jest. "That's a sour jest, Willy." My cell mate, Mister Maxwell Mentiroso, said it to me. "Keep it funny," he said an other time. Well he can not have it both ways. How do you keep it funny with out jests. So I am keeping in my sour one. I am in my sour mood today. Here comes a side track.

The reason for my sour mood is this. Big Beard, who, I have not mentioned him prior, has absconded on a bad day. Big Beard is or was a nick name, of course. He never told us any other name. His number was on his back, but you do not call a person a number, if you are not a guard. I am not one. So I did not call him one. So I call or called him Big Beard. I have a little beard my self. Naturally, he calls or called me Little Beard. We do not have razors in this place. A consequence is this. Every one of us in the male sex has some length, or other length, beard. Some others out side that sex have them too. It is an other sour jest. We never see live females here, excepting female

guards. They are not worth a look, for this reason. Do not look in the face of a guard. It will be your last look in any thing. We do see females who were never guards. They are dead, how ever. In that condition, they are not worth a look either.

A bad day is a day of a blizzard or some other perilous weather. A prisoner who absconds on such a day all ways succumbs to one peril or an other, it seems. It might be the old fashioned cold, which, it needs no explanation. It might be a peril of the warm spells, such as that a famished bear takes you for a walrus and swallows you down, or that some crack ice unlocks its jaws and swallows you up. Or it might be a newly fashioned, shoulder slung, double barreled high power death ray. One circumstance or circumstances you have to remember up here is or are this or these. The guards are armed. You are not armed.

You might think that you are. I found an absconded female on the snow once. Neither was she worth a look, top to bottom, front to back. She might have been worth one three days ago. She had a pretty feature, namely, her eye brows. Jet black wing tips. Her eyes them selves, you could not see. They were frosted over. The rest of her was broiled. Clothes burned to nought. Hair gone. Skin, all popped and drooling blisters. Her head was a smoking crater. She smelled like barbecue. If there was a Lord in the sky, I should have said Lord help me, for my mouth waters. We get little meat here, and most of it is vermin. This female clutched in her death grip a beer can opener with a dull point. She must have thought that she was armed. When you clutch your can opener, whiles they sling their death rays, you are not armed, how ever. They are. I hope that Big Beard made it through. I hope it. I do not think it. There fore, today I am sour. I have done with this side track.

I am going to retail some stories that my beloved person, Miss Lula, told me to make me forget my intentions. They were not bad intentions, as far as I was concerned. Miss Lula was not concerned with my concerns. She had her own concerns, it seemed to me. For an example, when we are at the kitchen table, and she is sitting on one side of it in her see through night gown, which, I can see right through it from the light of a wavy yellow flame of a red fat Christmas candle stuck in red candle wax in a beach shell ash tray on that table, and she is smoking her long Camel cigarette, telling me about her many lysergic acid trips, and I am sitting opposite and I am right well seeing through that see through night gown. I will not tell you what I see. I have told you all ready. When I get up, then, and come to her side of the table, and sit down, so that my right hip, clad in my white T shirt and my red and white stripe Amazon Panther style gymnasium short pants due to the August heat and to both of ours modesty, bumps her left hip. Followed by, she gets up and she shows me, advertently or other wise, all the items she has in that night gown, and goes over to the side of the table I was formerly at, and sits down opposite me again, only in reverse this time. Then, it seems that way.

That time she glanced at the Christmas candle, and she said all this. "I'm on the couch with Dax, candle on the piano. Pills and powders and big fat joints. Piano bench in front of us stacked with jars of all kinds of beer and wine and whiskey. Ninety six tabs of Golden Bird in plastic bubbles on a gold colored card. I pop three and wash them down with ale. We making out, and I'm not so much into it, because his breath is bad from his bad teeth. You get married, Willy, make sure she floss. Next thing you know, I'm shooting out the window like a witch on her stick. My heart's choking. The shack's a speck down there, nothing but a chimney wisp all there is to mark it. The hillside,

nothing but a bump on a rug. Stars coursing like rivers. Higher you get, more they are, rivers running off the edge of the world, coiling up the sky. Then it be a whirlpool, and I suck into it. Up is down and down is up. Drowning, I be. Stars pinwheel, rain sparks all colors. I like to scream. Can't. Land starts to run. Rivers and mountains. Desert, steppe, savannah. Jungles, Siberia. I'm flying all over the earth. All these teeny weeny animals running after me down there. Galloping, bounding. Dog packs. Prides of lions. Horses' herds in canyons spilling like water across the rocks. Lone wolfs on hilltops, howling. Skinny bug-eyed monkeys in trees, screeching and jumping. All the birds you ever see—clouds of them cheeping, chipping, beating they wings. Red, blue, green, yellow. Puffbirds, curlews, macaws, parrots, parakeets. Whatever you want. Penguins. Dodos. Silver hawks that hunt by they ever selves, stooping onto the other ones. Gorillas criss cross on the ground, staring at those stars and worshipping at the moon and picking they noses." Miss Lula's eyes spilled water.

That was one story. An other night, she told me one on her mother and her brother and her step father. This time, she had her pastel blue flannel bath robe with flowers on it on. The reason is, I asked her. We were sitting at the table in the dark of night with just that candle. Shadows of her breasts swaggered over crumbs on the formica top.

"Please put you on more clothes, Miss Lula," I said.

"Willy, it's so hot," she said, and she flapped her see through night gown. That made me close my eyes. She took pity on me, then. "All right, I take pity on you," she said. "My pastel-blue flannel bath robe with flowers on it is on a hook in the bath room," she said. I got it, and she wrapped it around her self, and shivered. She said, "That's

funny. It maketh me cold, not warm." Sweat drops gathered over her lips and she licked at them.

I said, "I do not know why you do it."

She said, "Oh yes you do."

"Why?" I said.

She said, "I won't say whut you know already."

"It pleases you," I said.

She said, "It don't."

I said, "Why do it, then?"

"You don't know, do you," she said.

"I do not know," I said.

She said, "You don't know, or, you don't know if you do or don't know? Which?"

"You sounding like Louis," I said.

"You sound like a idiot," she said. I sat back. She pushed her lip out and sighed.

I said, "Why you raging at me? You pull't my hair. You bringing me to suffer and distraction."

She said, "Hurt you, hurt me. Make go worser pains."

I said, "Huh." My feeling was mixed. I did not want her to stop it for all time. I only wanted her to stop it for tonight. I thought I would rest up and lust after her some more in a night or two. Miss Lula took a breath. She let some tears and wiped them off and sniffled.

I said her words. "Worser pains." She raised her yellow eye brows, sat back a little, and wrapped her pastel blue flannel robe with flowers on it tighter around. Then she used her blue eyes on me a while.

"Ever body has some," she said, finally. Then we were quiet. She smoked, and I coughed on her smoke. She was looking at me. She was seeing some one else, not me. How I know is, she said, "I looking at you, but I see someone else."

"Who?" I said.

She just looked a while, puffing and sucking, sucking and puffing. "Just someone," she said.

I said, "All right," and she puffed some more.

She said, "You look like him."

I said, "Yeah?" and she said it back.

I said, "Huh." She puffed more. "Who?" I said.

"He smoke, though," she said.

"Do he," I said.

She said, "He do."

"Well that is fine," I said.

Miss Lula said, "Orlando. You smoked, you be two peas in a pod."

"Oh, Orlando," I said. Then I said, "Orlando who?"

She said, "Orlando Griffin. We was child's together."

I said, "Do tell."

She said, "Half brother of mine."

"Which half?" I said, for I all ways like to know that kind of detail.

"My pa's a dentist these days, you know," was all she said.

I said, "So I learned 't other day."

She said, "Sam and Calafia split. Calafia married this here King Griffin."

"King Coal Griffin?" I said.

"That the one," she said.

"He is in gaol," I said.

"He is," she said.

"How your daddy doing these days? And Roland?" I said.

She said, "Roland's in California. Sam's here. He want to meet you."

"Do he," I said. I did not like to hear it. Miss Lula leaned across the table and tapped my arm. That arm was in a button shirt. The rest of my self was in that shirt as well, or it was in my blue jeans, or my cotton socks. I was hot. I was not in a gymnasium shorts mood that evening, how ever.

"He don't bite," Miss Lula said.

"Why this King Griffin in gaol?" I said. I was changing my subject, of course.

"I going to tell you," Miss Lula said. She sucked on her cigarette and her cheeks sucked in like the cheeks of the well known movie star Miss Bette Davis when she her self sucks on her movie cigarette. Perhaps you will be interested to know this fact. Miss Bette Davis is not as beautiful as Miss Lula. She is just all most as beautiful.

"Are you filthy rich, then?" I said.

"Do I look filthy rich?" she said.

"May be you penny wise," I said.

She said, "I am that. And pound foolish. And poor."

I said, "Huh."

Miss Lula said, "He gave me no pounds nor pennies. I show you whut he gave," and stood up.

I pushed back my chair. "Whut you doing," I said. Miss Lula unwrapped her pastel blue flannel robe with flowers on it and she let it drop. There I was, one more time, seeing through her see through night gown her brown nipples and brown puff. I said, "Come on, Miss Lula."

"Look," she said.

"I seen all that. Lord know it," I said.

She said, "Look closer," so I did. She rolled her eyes. "At the scars, Willy," she said. So I looked at those too. Silver stripes.

I said, "I seen stretch marks before."

She said, "Closer still," so I did. Some of the marks made a faint, light web across her breasts. They were burn marks. Puckered and miserable. You know it when you see it.

"Well howdy," I said.

She wrapped her self up again.

"Whut is this Griffin?" I said.

Candle light reflected off Miss Lula's eyes. She smiled. "A man," she said. She reached over and patted my hand. "Not your sort at all," she said.

I said, "Naws surely."

"Oh surely," she said, and she laughed her deep, growl laugh, which, it can sound all kinds of way to me. This time, the way it sounded was this. Sarcastically. Usually I

will anger at that tone of laughing. An exception is when the sarcastic person is showing me her scars. There fore, I did not anger. "You want to know about it?" said Miss Lula.

I said, "All right."

Miss Lula placed her elbows on the kitchen table. She placed her chin in her palms. Her hands carried her face skin and her eyes in to a slant. She told me this. "This King Griffin, he no Christian, but a *vodouisant*. Neither was he altogether white, but who is. He moved Calafia and me into a mansion on the north edge of Misery and brought me up in his belief. Cypress and loblolly cover the sky. He cut them down in plots one chain by one furlong and put in cotton. That earth dry enough to hold a crop. What he had was a plantation. Like richie riches, you know, who they got hobby farms up in the north, or horse ranches for nothing but a hobby in Virginia or Tennessee. What King had was a hobby plantation. He hire some colored people with nothing better to do and make them act like slave folk. Didn't hire no overseer, but pretended he was one his self. He rode the fields in riding boots and a cat whip on his saddle. Dressing the part, you know. Calafia knew where to buy that old time clothing, of course. And she did." Miss Lula shook her head and said, "He whipped them. Ten twelve licks, cut them on they backs. Two days wages a lick. He make a story, they learn they lines. They say those uppity lines, and old King Coal, red spots come on his cheeks. He say his own lines. He work his self to a righteous fury. Then cut. And cut. And cut." She sat up straight and looked at me. "Whut do you think of it?" she said.

"You see all that?" I said.

She said, "He drug us out to the fields to make us watch."

"How old were you all?" I said.

She said, "Orlando three. I eight."

I said, "Man nuts."

She said, "Evil."

"All through," I said. Miss Lula relaxed her shoulders. She breathed and sighed.

"I think it," she said.

"That one crazy ass ess oh bee," I said.

"Uh huh," she said. I waited. No more words came out her. I did not want to ask, but she wanted me to, it seemed.

So finally I said, "Whut is the burns from?"

She said, "Old King Coal, he had another game. Hide and seek. I hide. He seek."

I said, "Naws."

"Oh yes," said my beloved person.

"How old then?" I said.

"Nine," she said.

"Naws," I said.

"Sorry to say," she said.

"Whut gaol is he? I go kill him," I said.

She said, "Nay."

"Why not?" I said.

She said, "To me, he dead already."

"Whut gaol?" I said. No answer. I said, "Then whut?"

She lightly slapped one of my hands. I think, at this remove, that it was my left hand. "I fear to say the rest," Miss Lula said.

I said, "You speak lightly of me."

She took my hands in her hands and my reflex started up. "Oh Willy, you so hot headed," she said. Then, I knew that he was right there in Gum Municipal Gaol, south of town.

"Never mind," I said. Her eyes narrowed. I knew then that she knew that I knew.

"You can't get in anyway," she said.

I said, "Not with a gun or a knife, may be. I can spit in his face. Or poke out his eye with a pencil."

"You a mean little fellow," she said.

"Imaginative," I said, and she laughed. I will not say what I did.

Chapter 57

An other Gummian night.

An other night I asked of Miss Lula, "How did Mister King Griffin burn you that time?" The kitchen was the same, which was dark. The table was the same. So were the ashes in the ash tray, and the red fat candle, and the flame on that candle, bobbing and weaving and making our shadows on the kitchen walls go around.

Miss Lula rubbed her face. "Not tonight," she said.

"All right," I said.

Her eyes peeped between her fingers. "That game we played, ha ha." She just said those words Ha Ha, of course. I did not reply to them. Here is what she said finally. "So this is the way it was. I be lying in my bed. Young Orlando be lying in 't other next by me. Lights out, room's dark, door opens. Old Mister Griffin's long black cutout in the doorway. He a long skinny sort of fellow and his hair is lank and long too, if I have not told you."

I said, "I pictured him an other way."

"How?" she said.

I said, "Oh. Like Simon Legree."

"Whut he look like?" she said.

"I do not know," I said.

Miss Lula said, "Old King Coal smelled like wine and rose water. Face looked like mean old Punch's puppet face would look, if it was not a puppet but a skinny old man. Pop eyes. Bent nose. But he put on rose water and kept his self clean. Always in a

white ante bellum costume, you see, from the theatrical store, with a white broad brim hat on him, if he was not riding out. Jodhpurs and riding boots and that same hat if he was. He be sitting on the porch behind the colonnade of an afternoon, rocking in his rocking chair, sipping his pretend mint julep and all like that. Whut a ass. Ast me to sit on his lap one time, I put out my tongue and ran inside. That was the first night he come in to the room."

I said, "Hunh."

She said, "Be quiet."

"He will be sorry," I said.

She said, "He already sorry. And you not as dangerous as you want to sound.

You h'aint dangerous at all. You safe, is what you is."

"You think it," I said.

Miss Lula took her hands off her face, leaned towards me, and said, "You better be."

"No thing you to worry for," I said.

"Let me talk," she said.

I said, "I am not stopping you."

She made a disgusted expression and spoke as follows. "He came in, but he didn't get me, you understand. I ran out. He wouldn't fuss at me with Momma nearby. Kept he coming back, though. Kept I running out. Or I'd hide under the bed, or in the closet. He start creeping into it and separating the dresses and all on they hangers. 'Yoo hoo,' he'd say, very quiet. 'Yoo hoo Lula,' he'd say, and I'd crouch down with my hands on my face. One night, he snatched away my hand and pulled me out. I screamed and he let me go.

He kept on coming back. Roses and wine. I ast Orlando to trade beds, so, one night, up he carries Orlando into his arms and the little boy screams. Whut a drunk fool was that man. Then there's Missus June Beam and Momma in the doorway. He's got Missus Beam dressed up like some damn Aunt Jemima. Momma in her nightie, hair tied up in crazy little tails, black and white bow ribbons. Missus Beam holding up a silver candelabra. Naturally, weren't any real lights in that pretend old mansion. Momma's hands fly to her cheeks, teeth showing. She screaming too. Old King Coal, he whips Orlando around and lets fly. Boy hits the wall and slides down to a heap. Missus Beam dashes her candle stick at Mister Griffin, which, it catches my night clothes on fire. Everything in blazes. Momma gone. Old King Coal, off somewhere. Me, Orlando and Missus Beam, out on the grass, watching all things consumed in flame."

"Whut mean you, Momma gone?" I said.

"I mean she burnt to a crisp," Miss Lula said.

"I kill him," I said.

Miss Lula said, "No you won't."

Chapter 58

An other one.

An other night, I wanted to know of Miss Lula how, exactly, they found out Mister King Griffin.

"How exactly they find him out?" I asked her. She leaned over and blew out the candle. All was dark. I saw her shape, only, by moon light from the window.

"Mwah eh eh eh," she said.

"It funny?" I said.

Silence.

"It all funny, you wait enough," she said. More silence. Smell of hot wax and wick smoke. "Take you. You a gas," she said.

"I ain't," I said.

She said, "You are."

"You told over him," I said.

"Me and Missus Beam both," she said.

I said, "Who going to believe either one of you in nineteen fifty eight or what ever it was?"

She said, "Nobody, of course. He admit it."

I said, "Did he. Why he do that?"

She said, "Don't know. To cleanse his soul, do you suppose?" Then she said her Mwah Eh Eh Eh business an other time.

I said, "Unlikely." It is a phrase of Assistant Professor Henry Shine. It was an ambiguous comment in the circumstances. Take it either way. I only said it for practise.

"I going to convey to you some circumstances that require darkness," Miss Lula said.

"Are you," I said. I was for some reason, or, for some other reason, using my Assistant Professor Henry Shine phrases. In my mind, I was smoking his pipe as he used to. At times, it is better to feel like an other person than like your self, if you are my self. It was one of those times, apparently. "What circumstances?" I said.

"I going to let you know how old King did done when we found him," Miss Lula said.

"Go ahead then," I said. I was back to my own voice, at least, my talking to Miss Lula voice. She her self was whispering.

She whispered this. "That fake old mansion burned all night. Sun come up, more like sundown. Red light in a haze. Fly ash in the air and all over the earth. Blacked up timbers sticking from a big black hole, which, it was all that was left of that place. Firemen in they rubber coats and big helmets, walking around, looking for one thing and another."

"Whut?" I said.

"Whutever those people look for," she said.

"How about King?" I said.

"He was in one piece," Miss Lula said.

I said, "I go get him, then."

Miss Lula said, "One piece of him missing, though. Mweh eh eh eh." After she did not keep going, I thought this. She wants me to ask what piece. I did not want to ask, how ever.

"Whut piece?" I said.

She said, "A piece, if you a man, you despair at its loss. Nothing much worser. So you might as well admit all of your transgressions."

I said, "No."

Miss Lula patted around on the table and said, "Willy, feel for my fake leather Louis Vuitton bag. It up here somewhere." I found it and pushed it at her. She snapped it open, and in a minute she had lit a match. She held the match in front of her face. It cast its shadows up, as if her head was up side down. She looked at me that way. Then, she restored light to the red candle. Then, she looked at me again. "Some man I knew at that time found Mister Griffin a-moaning and a-groaning in the ashes and dirt. Took the old fuck's stuff in his fist and remorselessly squeezed it," she said.

"No," I said.

"Absolutely and surely," Miss Lula said.

I said, "Who was it?"

She said, "Some man done with nine-tailed cats."

Chapter 59

I am not care full.

I wagged my head a few times and said, "I will smash his face." Miss Lula blew some smoke at me.

"I never see you so worked up," she said.

"I do not know why I am so awe fully mad," I said.

She said, "It bears no mystery. You mad in general. Listen." She stopped talking at that time, how ever. She only looked at me and sent a doubled plume of smoke from her nostrils. I do not like to think how it looked. I felt little disgust at the time, how ever. When the air cleared she said, "We do something else. Better than kill some fool in gaol already. You know the billboard at the north end of Stonewall Jackson Boulevard? Say, 'Welcome to Klan Kuntree'?"

"How not," I said. We drove both ways past that sign, day in, day out, whiles she and Miss Cinnamon Askew were teaching me how to drive the car.

"I loathe that billboard," she said.

I said, "I as well."

"Come on then," Miss Lula said. I was all ready dressed, but she had to go in to her room. She came out again in white tennis shoes, blue jeans and a maroon and gold Misery Panther tank top, which, maroon and gold are the Amazon Panther colors, of course. You can see them on television in the NCAA basket ball tournament every spring. Hair flowed down her arm pits. Her nipples made long points in the cloth and

pointy shadows that waved as the candle flame waved. My own reflex happened suddenly, then. It is all ways sudden that way, it seems. At that time, I under stood.

"I hain't cutting no bill board down," I said. She put her hands on her hips, and looked me up, and looked me down.

She said, "I should say not. You too puny. I have my gasoline can and my siphon in the auto's boot, and my matches are here." She lifted her fake leather Louis vuitton bag by its fake leather straps.

"Oh no," I said.

She said, "Why not?"

"You could start a fire," I said. She rolled her eyes and flapped her lips. It sounded like a base ball card in a bicycle wheel. Or, see Part Zero of these confessions for an other figure I have for it.

"Well I sure hope so," she said.

"You will get us in trouble," I said.

She said, "In for a penny and all like that."

Miss Lula made me drive. She told me I needed the exercise. In the land of Amazon, no street lights shine past ten o'clock, post meridien. It saves on taxes. You get some extra car collisions that way, and that part is bad. You can zoom around with out any body see you, late enough at night, and that part is good. It was late enough. No body saw us, or, so I thought at the time. I was fairly calm, there fore. It was a mistaken impression. It was a mistaken emotion.

Towards down town we drove, through streets rowed with houses. Warm lights were in the windows. Peach trees rustled in a breeze. It was so warm and quiet, you

could hear those trees, even over the motor of Pegasus. Miss Lula was humming some tune I did not recognize, until I did recognize it. I had heard it the night Miss Isabel met her demise. It was called Gold Woman, or some similar woman.

"Gold Dust Woman. I read your mind," Miss Lula said.

"You do," I said.

"I do always. Don't forget I do," she said.

"All right," I said.

Miss Lula said, "Gold Dust, good stuff. Ninety ninety nine a gram.

Manufactured in a pristine laboratory three miles from Juarez."

"I do not want to know," I said.

"I awful," she said.

"You are," I said.

"Fine as Stevie, twice as bad," she said.

"You look like her," I said.

"She look like me," said Miss Lula. Neither one of those sentiments was true.

After the streets with houses, came the streets with stores of merchandise. Then we turned on to Stonewall Jackson and drove across the campus. Lawns and trees, trees and lawns. Fountains. Statues. Class room buildings far away down walk ways. They were lit dimly, late at night though it was. The reason is, no commonwealth monies shall be furnished to Amazon State University by decree of the House of Burgesses. Those lights are paid for by freshman and sophomore fees. There fore, all the light bulbs are twenty watts. We came out the campus past more stores and so on. After a while, tobacco fields. About forty minutes after we started, there is the billboard. It is lit plenty.

Klan Kliegs Kompany, Inc. is embossed on the metal housings of those lights, which, they lie all around the base of the bill board and illuminate it with great white intensity. It is a jest. It is all so the truth. We pulled on to the grass and parked in the back, where the kleigs did not shine.

"Fuyst thing we do is kill all the lamps," said Miss Lula. She had a ball peen hammer. It must have come in her purse. Out she hops and starts smashing. It was most remarkable to see her in motion. She was definitely all most all better. She hops like that when she is healthy, and she does not hop like that when she is not healthy. One lamp to the other, hop and smash. Flash, sparks, dark. Hop and smash. Flash, sparks, dark. Ten times or so, she performed those motions, until the only light left was the light from the dash board. I my self remained behind the wheel.

"Whut you doing?" she called to me. I put my head out the driver side window.

"Standing guard," I said.

"Hiding, you mean," said Miss Lula. She came over to the car. "Hand me my bag," she said. I handed it to her. Then she said, "Now come out here and help. Time to shine, Willy Wilson." I came out and stood on my side of the bug whiles she was on the other. We looked at each other over the top of it. Only light was from the stars, for it was a moonless night. I saw her hair standing out in the breeze, all stirred up by her activities. I imagined that I could see her face. I only had it memorized, how ever. In my memorized, imaginary Miss Lula face, her eyes were glowing large and blue, and her eye lashes made them beautiful. "Time, Willy," she said. I went to the boot and opened it. She came towards me from the other side and pulled out the gasoline. Her body warmth like to knock me over.

"My Lord," I said, but she was not attending to my conversation. She ran back up to the bill board and danced all around the wooden beams supporting it, pouring gasoline out the spout of the can on to the ground and on to the long grass at the base. She danced back and lit a match. Next moment she's in flames from toe to ankle. I jumped her and rolled us both on the grass. Took but a second or two, and the fire went out.

She said, "Ow." Her eyes rolled in to her head. I pulled her shoes and socks off. You are supposed to be care full when you do that. I found this out in the emergency room later on. I was not care full, how ever. I was careless. I whipped them off and flung them away, still as moulder.

Some one says, "Careless, ain't you, cousin." I look up and right in front of me is Detective Willy Wilson. He is in a suit and a tie and a fedora. His hand is on his hat and his tie is whipping in the breeze, just as Mister Broderick Crawford does it in the well known TV show Highway Patrol. No wonder. He is patrolling a high way, true or false. He says, "You arrested."

Chapter 60

Orlando and his dog.

"I won't take you in," said Detective Willy Wilson. We were in the plastic seats of the Gum emergency room waiting room. Silvery manacles connected two of our wrists. They were not silver manacles. They were silvery manacles. Other silvery manacles locked one of Miss Lula's wrists to the frame of her cot. We could not see her, for she was behind a curtain. We could see her later. Doctors and nurses in blue clothes, and men and women in green clothes who were not doctors or nurses, went in and out of the curtain. Miss Lula was swearing and weeping behind it. It was yellow, a light enough color, you could see, if you were I, her shadow cast by surgical lamps, tossing in this and that direction on the other side of it. Shadows of people leaned over her shadow and picked threads and dirt and so on out of the shadow of her flesh with the shadows of tweezers. At the sight of those shadows, wrinkly waves of pain passed up my legs from my ankles to my groin.

"No," I said. I said it several times.

"You just the pawn," Detective Willy Wilson said. "I take her in. Whut you think?" he said.

"Lord," I said. Detective Willy Wilson, my new cousin, leaned over to speak in my ear softly.

"The Lord isn't in it," he said. He shook my manacles. "You listening? I've got you good news," he said. Miss Lula's shadow surged violently up, and she shouted.

"Fuck shit clit prick!" she shouted. It is or was an habitual imprecation of our friend or late friend, Assistant Professor Louis Morse. I groaned. My new cousin, to my dismay and amazement, laughed. He laughed like a maniac. I thought to myself, It's a maniac.

"I laugh when I nervous," my cousin said. He leaned over and stared in to my eyes. He stared the way he did at the blood on the wall of Miss Lula's parlor the other time. Which is, the whites of his eyes showed, and the red veins of the whites of his eyes showed, and the pupils of his eyes were shrunken to dots. "You care I'm nervous?" he said.

I said, "Same one way or 't other."

He shook the manacles and said, "You ought. We family."

"Whut do you want from me?" I said.

He said, "Whut sort of Wilsons they make in your dark dale."

I said an other time, "Whut do you want?"

"To tell you my news, and you to care of it," he said. I sighed. "Listening?" he said. I rolled my shoulders. "You'd better," he said.

"I wait on you," I said.

"Don't worry about that trash in there," he said, and he pushed his big chin at the yellow curtain. I let spit drop out my mouth between my feet. He said, "That your expression? I trow'd they teach teachers more elegant manners."

"Still waiting," I said.

He said, "You and her's off the hook for Isabel." I froze up inside. I thought this. Time to be care full.

"Uh," I said.

"Why think you?" he said.

"Why think I whut?" I said, and he shook the manacles roughly.

"Don't shit me cuz," he said.

I said, "Who you put it on, then."

He said, "Okeh all right. Sound reasonable, or I might begin to suspect you. Ha, ha, ha." He did not make the sound. He said the words. Then, "Why, Alistair and that old girl June. Who else?" he said. He stood up and felt in his pockets for the little key.

I said, "Huh."

"Thassa reasonable sound," he said.

"They know this?" I said.

Detective Willy Wilson found the key and unlocked his side of the manacle and shook his wrist. "Whut did you ask me?" he said.

"They know your idea?" I said. Detective Willy Wilson leaned over and put his large hands on his knees and looked in to my face.

"My whut? My idea? Idea, you say?" he said, and he rue fully shook his head.

" 'cause it is ridiculous," I said.

He leaned over to unlock my side of the manacles. Without he meet my eyes, whiles he is fumbling with the key, "Is it," says he.

" 'course," say I.

When my hand is loose, he straightens up. "Why?" he says.

"They did nought to her. You know it," I said.

He said, "I do? Boyfriend first in line and you know it."

"I will not dispute an expert," I said.

"No no no no," he said, and he sat down next to me and looked at me with large, interested eyes. "I want to hear all of your thoughts on it," he said. I looked at my spit on the floor. He said, "Oh well," and stood up again. He tipped toe to the curtain and drew it aside. "Yoo hoo missy," he said. "You and your friend is off the hook. Feel better now." He started to walk away. I called after him.

"They know?" I called. He stopped. Slowly, he turned on one foot. Wonderingly, he looked at me.

He said, "How can you ask me that? They in the downtown gaol this very moment knowing all about it. And oh please. Miss Dee Lite Brown, she there, in the cafeteria. It on the basement floor, next to the holding room for violent. She see her daddy and her nanna across the way between the bars. I sure she innocent, though. I absolve her, in fact. You go get her. She crying her pore eyes out. "

He left. When she was at last alone, I peeked in at Miss Lula. "How are you feeling?" I said. She had bandages on her feet and a cloth over her eyes. She did not answer. I said, "I am going for Dee Lite." Miss Lula made a sound, so I walked closer. "What?" I said.

"Tell you something," she said, whispering. I leaned close.

"I am here," I said.

"Tell you about Orlando," she whispered. It took me a moment to realize that she was back, in her mind, to the mansion. "You going downtown," she said.

"I am," I said.

"Don't try anything," she said. I patted her arm. I wished I could care for her for ever. Not going to happen, how ever, and I knew it. She said, "He there too."

"I know," I said.

"Orlando tried," she said. Hearing that information gave me an uneasy feeling.

"Tell me an other time," I said.

She said, "Waited outside with Calypso and a shotgun. Calypso his sheep hound."

"Really," I said.

"Only nineteen," she said. She pulled off the cloth and looked at me. Her eyes had sunk in to purple hollows. She said this. "They taking King to the courthouse for an information. Orlando he ambuscading in some bushes. I watching from the steps. Out comes King among police from a paddy wagon. Up pops Orlando – misfire. They won't misfire they selves, of course."

"I will leave Mister Griffin alone," I said. Miss Lula was not done, how ever.

"Sits him back again. I fly down the steps, cross on the run Stonewall Jackson. Horns. Sirens. I get up to it and take hold his hands. Spreads a blood stain on his front. Pants. Shoes. Eyes glassing over. I call his name, he won't hear it. Just sit on the grass and pet his dog," she said.

Chapter 61

She walks.

I waited until morning to go down town. Why did I go. I thought, to give my self over and to bring back Miss Dee Lite Brown. You could not do both, of course, if you were I. You could do it, if you were I plus some one else. Some one else was not in it, how ever. There fore, you could not do it. For some reason, or, some other reason, I was not in my right mind. You have just been told by me one way that I know this. Here is an other. Down at the gaol house I saw Miss Isabel, pacing back and forth at the doors. May be that my eyes were at fault. No, Willy. Your mind.

I did not know her at first, for two reasons. One, that she was facing the other way. The other, that she was bald. Pink egg with ears on standing on her neck, her head was. Her neck's nape was as bald as the rest of her. Her little round buttocks rolling in her white shorts, her motions, her little round shoulders, her little blouse tied up with strings either side of those shoulders, and the baubles and bangles on her arms and wrists and ears, were familiar, how ever. I experienced a presentiment as I approached the doors from where I had parked Pegasus, a queer mix of fear and joy. She had in her fists a length of yellow timber, attached to the top of which was a sign, the which, I could not read it from that side. When I reached the door, I held it open an extra long moment to watch her turn around. First, I saw that the sign was a blank. Then I saw who she was. I was slow to recognize her face, even looking in to it. She do not seem to be her self, with out she have on her wing tipped eye brows, her neck's nape's heart aching wisps, her beauteous crown of glory, or any of her other hair. She did not have them. She did not

have her fore arms' hair. She did not have her arm pits' hair. She did not even have her eye lashes. At length, how ever, as she approached my position, I noticed the pretty snub shape of her nose. The truth dawned. It dusked, rather. You can know what came over me at that time only if you have seen some one you desired and destroyed walking towards you, bright as day. It is a sight vouchsafed only to a haunted person or a crazy person. Which one was I. I plump for crazy, on this account. I prefer it to the other.

"Is it you?" I said. She walked by with out looking at me or speaking. At the end of the block, she turned and walked towards me again. Her face was as blank as her sign. I watched her go back and forth. How long, I can not say. I did not have my watch. After some while, I ran away.

Chapter 62

Frost and decay.

Some time that summer, before Detective Willy Willson immured the Reverend Alistair Beauson, but after we saw him in the clearing, I found my self wishing to make a clean breast of it. I place most of my events of that particular summer to within one day, but not this event. However, I can place it between those other two events, and I can place it on a Sunday. All you have to do to agree with me on the chronology, is to read this particular Chapter 62.

I wished to clean my breast and my soul. I went over to a church I knew of near the campus. It was no thing but a house on a street where I had noticed, at times, cars parked in front on Sundays. So I guessed it was a church, and it was. This house was a little bit brighter and nicer than the near by ones, and it had a stone fountain in its front yard. Squirrels and corbies gathered on the rim and quarreled over which first should drink the water in there. It attracted my notice because a green and yellow parrot regularly joined that quarrel, and exploited its powers of speech to prevail over its enemies. Corbies too have the power of speech, in my opinion, but that power is more primitively developed in them, in my opinion. Further more, squirrels all so have that power, which, its development is even more primitive in them than it is in a corbie, in my opinion. I rely only on my opinions in the matter for the following reason. I have no thing else to rely on in the matter. The only utterance that a squirrel has emitted in my hearing is a sort of bark. It all ways has the same volume and rhythm. If you have heard a squirrel bark, then you know it. The only utterance a corbie has emitted is a crow, of

course. It is more expressive than a squirrel's bark, in my opinion. When a corbie crows at you, it has a good reason, in my impression. You are a villain or a fool, and that crow is telling you. If a corbie crows at an owl, for an example, then that owl is a villain. It is after chicks. If a corbie crows at a person, such as, at my self, for an example, then, as a general matter, that person has been passing a foolish thought through his mind. I have noticed it. When you are a squirrel sitting near a corbie on the rim of a stone fountain, and you are after that corbie's water, then you are a fool, I believe. A crow will peck out your eyes, if you are a squirrel. It is why you are a fool. A thirsting parrot is an other sort of bird entirely. It will show its green and yellow pinions in a threatening manner, all so, fan out the color full cockade on the top of its head. Then it will sidle up next to you and disfavour you with a stream of invective such as ought not be sounded near a church. That particular parrot knew words for the male and female private parts and for the actions of those parts. It was a profane and unsavory parrot. So, I noticed it. So, I noticed the church it came from. So, it was the church I went in to. There was no sign in front, but I surmised it was Baptist. The reason is, there is no thing but Baptists and Catholics in Crow Hollow, and this was not a Catholic church. Catholic churches will not look like some person's own house, as a general matter. So I used a process of elimination. I eliminated the Catholic possibility, and I was left with the Baptist possibility. It is how I made my surmise that it was Baptist. I did not surmise who was the pastor, how ever. The pastor was the Reverend Alistair Beauson. When I saw who the pastor was, here was my thought. My, my. By this happen stance, my plan was compromised. How ever, I sat in his parlor, on a couch near the front window, whiles he did the matters of his service in the back of his dining room. Between me and him was a

crowd of people of several races and social stations and so on. It was not as musical or as loud as it might have been. There was a suitable amount of music and swaying and hand clapping and so on, but it was more subdued than I might have expected, if I had taken time to think of expecting some thing. I did not take time. I woke up in the morning and thought to my self, "Clean breast," and I hurried over there. The Reverend Alistair Beauson sang and swayed and clapped with the rest of them, but his heart was not in the matter, as it seemed to me. He knew that I was in his house, as it seemed to me.

After the service, I waited for the people to do their hugging and their hand shaking and so on. The Reverend Alistair Beauson was looking at me across the room. He had on the full regalia. His black hair was spread around his long head like a halo. His blouse was green and white, and his skirt was all white, and his gold or golden crucifix gleamed in candle light, all so, in electric light. He had both kinds going. He spent a long time at his front door, finally, with the last person who was there other than my self, who, she was a little, skinny old blind white woman with white hair tied back tightly in a hair net, and with a great deal to say, apparently. She ended her discourse by circling the Reverend Alistair Beauson around his waist and resting her head on his chest next to his crucifix with her eyes closed. I do not know why she bothered closing her eyes. They were not letting in light to distract her. Neither were the Reverend Alistair Beauson's eyes letting any light. He was staring in to the middle distance. After she had at last left, he came back to him self. He stood there, watching me, not saying any thing. He just shined his eyes at me, so I got up and went to the door. He raised his eye brows. "Man that kicked my dog," he said.

I said, "Huh."

"What are you here for?" he said.

I said, "I came to make a clean breast of it." He just looked at me. "But you know it all ready," I said. He kept looking. I said, "It was an accident."

He said, "No it wasn't."

I said, "I swear."

"Do not do that," he said, and he swung his head and his halo left and then right slowly, in a warning. He closed his eyes. "Isabel, she was a piece of work," he said.

That was surely the case, so I said, "That is surely the case."

"I wanted to take her out myself at times," he said.

I said, "No!" Just like that, with an exclamation point.

He raised his eye brows over his shuttered eye lids and said, "Some days, I couldn't look at a knife without seeing it in her back." He was quiet for a time. Then he said, "You know what I am now?"

I did not know, so I said, "I do not know."

He said, "I go in back of the house at night. I have woods back there and a running stream. I take all my clothes off and I roll in the dirt by the bank. I eat the dirt."

I said, "Are you hungry?"

The Reverend Alistair Beauson opened his eyes, disfavoured me with a strange look, and closed them again. He said, "I do like the bucket on a backhoe. I scoop it into my mouth with my jaws. Then I chew it. Then I swallow it." He opened his eyes another time. "I try to eat the rocks, too, but I gag," he said.

"I am sorry for it," I said.

He smiled, or, he smirked, perhaps. He said, "You have more sorrow coming."

I said, "I know it."

"You ever see that movie where the man says, all is frost and decay?" he said.

"No," I said.

He said, "Bergman."

I said, "Huh," for this reason. I did not know what I ought say.

He said, "That's it. Frost and decay."

"It is hot here," I said.

He said, "That too."

"I got to get an other pastor," I said.

He said, "What for?"

I said, "I said."

He said, "I should tell you, my son, go and sin no more?"

I said, "You will not do."

"Why not?" he said.

I said, "You are one of my victims."

"You're one too," he said.

"You are stating the obvious," I said.

He said, "That's the gig."

"What shall I do?" I said.

He said, "Write it out, and sign it in blood, and walk it over to the gaol house."

I said, "I do not have blood for that."

He said, "You could cut your throat."

Chapter 63

A conversation among children.

Master Joshua Oleander arrived back in Gum on August fifteenth that year. I went to get him at the air port, and with me in Pegasus was Miss Dee Lite Brown. Men rolled stairs to the air plane door and down came the boy in short pants and fancy shoes, hair slicked and combed, skipping the steps two at a time. I swooped him up and he hugged me, which, I liked it.

"You big," I told him.

"I know it," he said, and he nodded with a solemn expression.

I said, "Whut they give you to eat out there, elephants?"

"Uh huh," he said.

"Lessee how big you are," I said. I put my hand level to my fore head one side, level to his on the other. "Big as I am," I said. I kissed his cheek and put him down.

"It's bigger than he is," said Miss Dee Lite Brown, and she was. She had him by a half foot. Let me tell you what she looks or looked like. Three or four feet tall. Eyes like those in the head of the Reverend Alistair Beauson, who else. It is a sad, dark brown kind of eye, and large. Halo of brown fuzzy hair in blue ribbons on her head. Where else would it be, of course. And she was in some kind of long green dress.

"You ain't," Master Joshua Oleander said.

I said, "Who catch them elephants?"

Master Joshua Oleander said, "I did." We were walking on the tarmac in to the terminal.

"You never caught a elephant," said Miss Dee Lite Brown.

"Yes I did," was his reply.

She said, "How a little boy like you catch a elephant."

I said, "He must of had help." We were in side by then, standing at a candy counter. I got them Silver Boy Cup Cakes two to a pack. I got them one pack a piece and I paid twenty five cents. "Ain't you had help?" I said.

"No," he said.

I said, "Whut? You caught you a elephant all by your self?" We were going down the escalator and I held them by their hands. One hand each.

"Uh huh," said Master Joshua Oleander, and he nodded gravely several times.

I said, "I am astounded. You must be strong. He strong, ain't he." I addressed my query to Miss Dee Lite Brown, who, she was not listening. She was concentrating on dragging her skirts in an escalator step's teeth, evidently trying to get her self in trouble. I said, "Girl, look out."

"Look out, girl," said Master Joshua Oleander.

"You look out," Miss Dee Lite Brown said.

We got to the bottom and she fortunately escaped with her life in tact. Now we were walking in the car lot. "You eat any boogers in California?" I said to Master Joshua Oleander. He nodded solemnly an other time and Miss Dee Lite Brown shook loose my hand. She wrinkled her nose, pursed her lips and squinted.

"Eew," she said. I am reproducing it phonetically. May be that you spell it an other way.

"Lots," Master Joshua Oleander said.

"Breakfast lunch or dinner?" I said.

"All three," he said.

"They taste good on a sandwich of elephant?" I said.

He said, "Uh huh."

"Don't talk that way," Miss Dee Lite Brown commanded.

"Lemme ask him one more question," I said.

She said, "No," but I ignored her.

"Human boogers, monkey boogers, or elephant boogers?" I said.

"Ain't see monkeys," Master Joshua Oleander said. We were at the car, which, I unlocked it and we all got in side.

I said, "No? No zoos where you were? Where were you, any way?"

"El Ay," he said.

"Zoos are there," I said.

"I see them," said Miss Dee Lite Brown.

"See whut. Monkeys?" I said. We were on the service road to Highway 1861.

There are only five or six high ways at all in the land of Amazon. They are all named for glorified people and battles and dates. Miss Dee Lite Brown nodded, which, I did not see it. Then I looked at her in my mirror, so she nodded once more. "Where you see monkeys?" I said. She did not answer me. She was opening her cup cake wrapper. It

was not quite there yet. "How taste them cakes?" I said. She looked at me in the mirror with a wise, grown up expression expressing her tolerance for my stupidity.

"I'll tell you after I have eat of them," she said. Our rodомontade continued in that fashion all the way home, which, it was Miss Lula's home, for this reason. Miss Dee Lite Brown had no other place.

Chapter 64

I find out Miss Lula's true nature.

I and Master Joshua Oleander and Miss Dee Lite Brown had to stay all alone that day, for Miss Lula was still in her burn ward. I let them in to the yard and wandered from room to room. Out the back windows, I checked them up now and then. They were eating of her flowers under the chinaberry tree. If Miss Lula had been around, they would have caught it. It was not her around, how ever. It was I around. So, they did not catch it. How did those flowers taste, I wonder. I walked in to Miss Lula's bed room and looked at her walnut chiffonier's mirror's mirror frame. That million dollar draught was still in it. How much was that Mario worth, any way, I wondered. He might have it. He sells or sold John Deere harvest machines out on Kleagle. If I were Miss Lula, I had brought that draught to the bank and found out. Fortunately, I am not she. It is better to love Miss Lula than to be Miss Lula, in my opinion. I am not she, so my opinion is not very well founded. How ever, if she had such an opinion her self, neither would hers be very well founded. Only the Lord knows, if He She or It is on the case. On that question my jury is out.

Miss Lula's water bed, which, it is or was in the middle of her room, is or was very large. I all ways worried, what if you poked a hole in it. Was there a tub under there that, it would catch the spill? Or would it flood the floor. I hate a flood. Therefore, it worried me. I sat on the blue comforter, sewn all over with doves, loblolly flowers and roses. Waves rolled away from my back side. The doves sewn on the comforter ruffed their feathers, opened their beaks, turned their heads, blinked, and

looked straight at me. The flowers sewn on the comforter swayed as it were in a breeze. A sewn on butter fly settled on one of them. It opened and shut its wings precisely twice and flew away again. I jumped up and looked around. I bent down and looked beneath the bed. I stood up. I looked behind heavy muslin curtains on the sides of the bed room window. There was a little coarse weave rug on the floor at the bed's foot. I lifted an edge of it by two fingers and looked under. Again I stood up. Waves were rolling back and forth in the mattress frame.

Miss Lula's chronicle was sitting out on the doily by the mirror. How I knew it was her chronicle, was by these indications. It was locked. The cover said Chronicle. It was a tatty old black leather cover. I stood over her chronicle and my bowels loosened. If I sneak around in an other person's house, it will happen that way. I sneak around now and then. May be that it all so happens to you that way. Or, may be that you do not ever sneak around. Then my hat is off to you. I visited the water closet, which it had no sink, so I washed up in the kitchen and came back to look at the diary. Mathematicians have a predilection for locks, in specific, for picking them. I am one, there fore, I have that predilection. There fore, I picked her lock. It was not too hard. I will skip how. You might be a twelve year old boy subject to temptations. You ought not read this in that case any way. Shoo.

I opened Miss Lula's chronicle to a random page. It was her familiar hand. It said, GET YOU OUT THISEYER BOOK WILLY WILSON YOU DONT I PLAY YOU HOB. I thought, She a hob her self, a very hob, laws yea verily. I threw her chronicle to the pine plank floor and wondered at it.

Chapter 65

Miss Lula judges us.

"Thass an awe full prank you played me," I said to Miss Lula when I was in her burn ward. I was there to come get her. She was limping around packing.

"Lay-low to catch meddlers," she said.

"How your feet?" I said.

"Good enough," she said.

"They ugly," I said, for this reason. They were ugly. Her calves were blotched purple and her ankles were still wrapped in some kind of fancy bandage. She put her clothing item down, what ever it was, and looked at me with an angry, hard expression.

She said, "Poke your Jew nose some where else. I ain't here for you to see."

It hurt me so much to hear her say it that all I could say was, "Do not speak that way, please Miss Lula," and I could say it only in a whisper.

"Ugly for ugly," she said, and she turned away.

"I only half," I whispered. Her shoulders went down and so did her head and so did her hair, which, that hair needed washing. She looked at me again.

"Don't make me say sorry this minute. I feel too badly. I hurting," she said.

"All right," I said. She looked me up and down.

"I scare you good?" she said.

I said, "Twice good."

She said, "We get there I show you something." So all the way home I was dreaming of a Miss Lula Smith strip show, but that was not what she had in mind.

"Whey the kids?" she said in the car.

"Over to Missus Beam's," I said.

"She out then," said Miss Lula.

"She is," I said.

"That son of a bitch let her go," she said.

I said, "I guess he did. Last night she showed up from a taxi cab with a cardboard valise and stayed over. This morning, took them to Crow Hollow, and I came here."

"Whut we go do about Alistair?" Miss Lula said.

I did not know, so I said, "I do not know."

"Surely they will put him to the Halifax gibbet," she said.

"Axe," I said.

"Axe for whites," she said.

I said, "He not no Amazon nigger. He a foreign nigger." I was that up set. Miss Lula stared at me. "All right all right," I said. She looked out the windows and seemed to think a while.

"I fear we damned," she said.

Chapter 66

She scries in water.

Miss Lula picked up her tatty black chronicle from the white lace doily on her black walnut chiffonier. She grinned her wonder full but stained buck teeth, waved her book at me with one hand, and elegantly shook her pointing finger at me with her other. She opened the top drawer of her chiffonier and pushed her chronicle under some panties. She opened the bottom drawer and drew out a wide, shallow silver bowl. It was not a silvery bowl. It was a silver bowl.

"Whut is it?" I said.

"Whut you see," she said. I saw a bowl chased with figures. They were chasing each other. Men with goat legs and palm branches in their hands, chasing unclothed young women who had garlands in their hair. Round and round they go for ever.

"Pretty," I said. Miss Lula took it in to the kitchen and laid it on the table. I followed. She lit the fat red candle with a safety match from a drawer by the stove, which, it is or was a gas stove.

"It day light," I said.

"It magick," she said. She blew out the match and sulfur smelled the room. She went in to her room again and came out after some while with two clay jars. A tall blue one and a small green one. She said, "Chikataw waters," which, those waters come from Happiness Creek, the which, those are the waters that spill in to Misery River in the God Awful Hills. I have all ready told you some matters of those waters in Chapter Thirty

Two. You can check if you want to. Miss Lula pulled the cork on the tall blue jar and poured water in to the bowl. "This from a saint," she said, and she pulled the other cork. A sharp smell came up. She shook the green jar over the silver bowl and some black drops dripped out. "Flow of a mambo lived two centuries," she said. She shook more out and said, "Nine hundred ninety five dollars a ounce in Dessalines. Tenth ounce."

"How you know she live that long?" I said, and Miss Lula looked sharply at me.

"Watch," she said. She sat on one side and I on the other. I only saw black speckles on clear water, turning in circles. Miss Lula closed her eyes and spread her long fingers above the bowl.

I said, "Miss Lula—" and she shushed me.

"Go quiet inside," she said. She wiggled her behind and her shoulders whiles her hands she kept level. She tossed her hair. "Mami Wata, I call you. Mami Wata. Mami Wata," she said. She opened her left eye, said, "Vodoun water folk," and closed it again. "I call you. I call you. I call you," she said. She opened her eyes, put down her hands, and searched the water. "I ain't see it," she said. It seemed awe fully funny, so, I teased her.

"May be that Old King Coal did not teach you the true Vodoun," I said. Miss Lula stood up.

"Whut you know about it?" she said. In a trice the sky went dark out side the kitchen window. I looked at the cat clock. One hour post meridiem, and a clear day.

"Whut is up?" I tried to say. My tongue cleaved to the roof of my mouth. I coughed in stead. The room was dark. Two little candle flames jumped around in Miss Lula's eyes.

"Careful whut you say to me," she said. Next I knew, I was alone. I felt I had only just awakened. I thought, Must of been a dream. I looked at the clock an other time. Nine hours. It was dark out, so, more probably, post meridiem than the other. Under the circumstances I was not sure, how ever. I stood up to go turn on the TV in the parlor. My head felt like a hot iron bar had been thrust through it one ear to the other.

I said, "Whoa." I walked from the kitchen to the parlor, balancing, the way we balance walking on ice, up here in the land of Arctica. I turned the set on. There was the nine o'clock news, which, it is on in the evening, not in the morning. Well that relieved me a little. But the picture went static and, when it cleared, there was Miss Lula, laughing at me. I was not so relieved any more.

Chapter 67

Miss Lula waves.

That week end I had to meet Miss Lula's father. I did not want to.

"You got to. He expect it," she said. We were in the kitchen on Friday morning and the light was entirely natural. We were having our break fast before work.

"Whut for?" I said.

She said, "For you being my lover who took such good care of me."

"That is a good one," I said.

"You coming," she said.

"Or whut?" I said. She smirked and shook her head.

"You my good friend. I won't threaten you," she said.

"Oh a new policy," I said.

"C'mon, it's a party," she said.

I said, "Yeah? Whut we celebrating?"

"That I better," Miss Lula said. She raised her palms level with the ceiling and twirled around. She did look fairly health full. She was in some kind of short pants and her calves and her ankles did look better to me. I could not see if her feet looked better. They were in side gym socks, which, those socks were in their turn in side her tennis shoes. You can not see feet they are wrapped that way. To state the obvious.

It is an old remark on me that Assistant Professor Louis Morse used to make.

"You're always stating the obvious," he would say to me. "Why do you do that?" he would say. "Do you think I'm some kind of idiot?" he would say.

"Not at all, Louis," I would say back. "I do not know why I do that way," I would say. Here is a theory of it, how ever. I am the idiot. I kept that theory to my self for obvious reasons. It is an other favorite saying of Assistant Professor Louis Morse. "For obvious reasons." Every thing seemed to be obvious to that fellow. I wish he was here right now. I would slap him on his back. "How you doin', Louis?" I would say to him. I can not do it. I can not say it. It is unfortunate.

"You do look fairly health full," I said to Miss Lula.

"Thank 'ee," said she.

Next morning was a Saturday, of course. We left the children in Crow Hollow and drove out Kleagle to the Moonlight Mile Motel. It was going to be Miss Lula and I in one motel room, and Doctor Smith and his paramour Miss Elvina Monroe in an other motel room. I had to beg.

"Please, Miss Lula, I will not try to dishonor you," I said. I said it on Friday morning, so, I am taking this back there.

"Why you got to be in my room, then?" she said.

I was embarrassed to tell her my reason. My reason was, I was embarrassed. "I embarrassed," I said, how ever.

She said, "Embarrassed for whut? You a nice man, you help me out, whut you have to be embarrassed for?" she said.

"You know," I said.

She curled the backs of her hands on her hips and tossed her pony tail. "No I do not," she said.

"You do too," I said.

"You wasting my precious time, Willy Wilson," she said. "My mice await and so do your ice cream cones," she said.

"I ain't your lover I am embarrassed on," I said.

"You kidding," she said.

"We in different rooms he find out," I said.

"Good golly Miss Molly," said Miss Lula. She looked at me. "All right. I think about it," she said.

After we got to the motel, we rented just one room together. I dressed in the water closet, and she dressed in the bed room. She was all ready by the pool when I came out. Doctor Smith and Miss Elvina were in lawn chairs on the other side, playing cards. I walked up and looked at Miss Lula's bikini. It was yellow and skimpy, which, that is how they make them, of course. She looks or looked better with no thing at all on. I did like the look of her skin in broad day light, how ever. It glowed. It was as pure as milk. Her breasts, I just wished I could take off the top of that bikini and kiss or lick or rub with my nose or rub with my lips or other wise contact with my eye lids, even, the nipples of them. Miss Lula looked that fine to me, in perfect truth, all though, I did not act the cavalier and say so. I was no cavalier, which, she knew it. She was sitting at the edge with her feet in the water. A little hair went up and down her shins and I even liked that too. Her brown sunglasses with their wide frames the colors of a guitar pick were up in her bangs and she was squinting at me. She looked me up, and she looked me down.

"You a clean machine," she politely said.

I said, "Sure," and I dived in.

I am no very good swimmer. I was going around under the water on my back, swimming blind, and I had my head bump some thing, which it was no thing but a beach ball, but I panicked. I have not resolved in my mind the details of this event, but I found myself headed straight down. I was curled up with my knees in my hands, and air bubbles pouring out my nose, and bigger ones blathering out my mouth like gleaming gobs of mercury from some monstrous size thermometer. My air was in those gobs. They writhed like intelligent creatures trying to escape from me. My thought was this. Come back here. Life, come back here. It was not so much a thought as a feeling. I was doing no thinking I know of at that time. I noticed, then, the walls of the swimming pool. They were in remarkably good focus, for some reason, or, for some other reason. I saw seams in the concrete. I saw the iron ladder with rivets and I saw the rivets in the finest detail. I found my self staring, for some reason, or, for some other reason, at this plain expanse of sand colored concrete. May be that this is the reason. Concrete partakes of existence. It does not partake of much else. You looking at concrete, you looking at existence, and I was attracted with intensity at that moment to that quality. For obvious reasons. I was then over taken by an emotion like a wave. I had not had that feeling prior or since. I have read about it, how ever. A fighter pilot will feel it in his tail spin to the surface of the surface of the water. I was not on my way to that place. I was going the other direction. Your physical situation is reversed, if you are drowning, to if you are falling. Your feeling situation is much the same, how ever. You are coming to the end of your string with absolutely no doubt, and all you have left to do is to feel it. What you felt, if you were one of those pilots, or, if you were I, at that time, was this. Love. Whom are you loving, you may ask. This is whom. Your self.

Then I was caught by some one's arms. I perceived, through a froth and chaos of silver mercury gob bubbles, that they were Miss Lula's arms. She had me gripped, circled, and surrounded. At that time, I panicked some more. I kicked with my legs. I thrashed left and right with my hips and my shoulders. I wrested my self loose and grabbed Miss Lula in turn. Then she was in my death grip. It was she who was gripped, circled, and surrounded. Soon enough, down we went, sinking towards the floor of the pool, spilling both our silver mercury gob bubbles all the way. As there was no profit in holding on, I let go. Miss Lula floated away, her hands and her hair waving. I felt this. Fare thee well. I did not think it. I felt it. Next moment, I was shooting loose and free to the twisting tossing blanket of the surface of the water, through which, the sky was all so twisting and tossing. Beyond it, the human people, betokened by their snorkels and goggles and that flesh color they all had, were up to the same shennaginans. The water washed away from my eyes and I saw the sky more clearly, blue and smooth and white whisped. Back in life I was. I felt unwelcomely awakened from a dream. I was coughing and gagging. I did not want particularly to be back, but my lungs did. They cried for air like a baby's. The water cleared, and there was Miss Lula Smith. I pulled my self up on to the tile next to her. She was looking at me anxiously. Beads of water spotted her face and her eye lashes, which, they were in little wet points. Her hair was plastered to her skull and her lips were ever so red and beautiful.

I said, "Now you are responsible for what ever I do the rest of my life."

She rolled her eyes and said, "Don't say that."

That night I was on the floor, right on the linoleum. The moon was up. The room had a small high window in a square steel frame with out curtains. The moon shined

through the window on to Miss Lula in the bed above me. Its light was passing through her eye lashes. While the moon was in the window, I looked at those lashes. When it slid below the window sill, then I slept.

Chapter 68

She waves an other time.

I took a phone call early one morning. Miss Lula was in her shower. Man in a deep voice says, "Looloo?"

"We have no Looloo," I say.

"Hell you don't," he says.

"Nay I s'wan," say I.

"Tell her it Lorne," the man says, and he hangs up. Be fore I can do the same, some clicks come down the line. Then a buzz. Then, more clicks.

"Hello?" I say.

Voice of a man says, "That you, Ed?"

I say, "No. Who is this?" A silence passes whiles I listen to the other fellow's breathing, during which I recognize that breathing. It is Detective Willy Wilson's breathing. "Whut do you want?" I say.

Detective Willy Wilson, or some one quite similar, says, "Yayzoo Christo," and breaks the connection.

Then I was boiling some eggs. Miss Lula came bare foot in to the kitchen in Assistant Professor Louis Morse's old dragon kimono, knocking water from her ear.

"Do they call you Looloo ever?" I asked her.

"Sometime," she said.

"Lorne called," I said. Who is Lorne, I wondered. I did not choose to ask it, how ever.

Miss Lula said, "Mmm," but she went off with out she called back the fellow. At supper, I reminded her, but she was on her way out to Crow Hollow. "I make it up to him," she said.

Her words gave me no joy. I went in to my waiting mode. I learned all my modes from Assistant Professor Henry Shine and Assistant Professor Louis Morse. Assistant professors had several different modes, such as, babble mode, sexy mode, pissy mode, sweetie pie mode, and so on. Other professors might have other modes. I do not know those modes. I know my waiting mode, how ever. In my waiting mode, every thing has a slow motion. It could be that it means my mind has sped up. A movie camera that speeds up will show you slow motion. Or it could be that it means my mind has slowed down, but I think it is the other. Some trouble alerts you. Your mind speeds up, it seems to me. I was alerted, so, I was waiting.

I waited about twenty nine hours. Miss Lula came home late on Friday. Master Joshua Oleander and I were in Master Joshua Oleander's bed room playing with his Tinker Toys™. I will remind you of this. That the wall between Master Joshua Oleander's bed room and Miss Lula's particular bed room is no thing but a plate glass window. It has a heavy brown curtain on it. Miss Lula came in to her bed room with a man. They both were naked. Miss Lula did not seem to notice us. I do not know why not. She had to know we were in that house some where. May be that she was high or drunk, or may be that she did not care. I do not know the mode her mind was in. May be that I never knew any of her modes at any time. It would not surprise me. That man was not any fellow named Lorne. He was the Reverend Alistair Beauson. I was astonished. How did he get here, I wondered. The Reverend Alistair Beauson did in deed notice us.

I could tell it by this sign. He looked straight at me. I drew the curtain, then. Even though that the curtain was shut, we could hear all the sounds those two made. I am leaving their sounds out of the account. Master Joshua Oleander slipped his head between my tee shirt and my belly. Through a gap in the curtain, I could see one of Miss Lula's arms waving up and down on her water bed in the rhythm of what they were up to in there. Even in those circumstances, her arm had a certain loveliness – the shape of it, the color of it, the motion.

Master Joshua Oleander said some thing in to my belly. His breath was damp hot. I said, "Say whut?"

"I want you for my daddy," he said.

I said, "I can not be your daddy."

In the morning, I followed the Reverend Alistair Beauson past Miss Lula with my valise in my hand. On the stoop Detective Willy Wilson was leaned over, huffing, locking a chain to the reverend's ankles. The reverend was gazing at the sky over my cousin's head, as he might do if he was by him self. With a rogue's wink my cousin said to me, "Fambly visit." I looked at Miss Lula. In my mind, she and I were the ones who were by our selves, as we had been on the night of our wonder full colloquy.

Miss Lula did not speak to the reverend, but to me. "It be quiet here without you," she said.

Part Four

Golden Bird

Chapter 69

How I got here.

I was no fool, so I had a job ready for me in the well known city of Zenith in the land of Minnesota. It was not bad when I got off the air plane in August. I knew that some thing was wrong, how ever, when it snowed on me in October. I was riding a bicycle, and it was only a smatter, so no harm was done. I was warned, how ever. By January, I felt that I was on an other planet. The snow at the street corners was piled to my shoulder. I had a room in a house off Benjamin Franklin Avenue near the Indian Center. It was convenient to the university. I walked that avenue in warm clothing from an Army surplus, but Indians do not wear warm clothing in Zenith. You clump to the food store in your sorrel boots and your pea green army coat with a genuine wolf's hair hood. You will recall this fashion information, if you have read Chapter 5. Those Indians stand in a door way and laugh at you. "Ooh, a moon man," they say. Any how, I recall one that did. You will recall that as well. Why I judge it as worth an other report, is, it has been quite some while since Chapter 5. You have stuck it out. Congratulations. May be that you remember Chapter 5 very well, how ever. Then you will disagree. So be it. I am only considering your forgetful qualities. Most people have them. I my self have forgotten a great many items. An other time, a man threw a concrete block off the roof of the branch city library, which, it smashed down at my feet in front of me. An other time, one took a swing at me as I was walking by him for some reason. These

events happened at night. It is good policy not to walk on that street at night. I walked past a corner bar another time, two or three blocks down. An EMT wagon was parked there. Out the door comes a man on a gurney, black hair, two long braids, about twenty years old. His pupils were dilated and fixed, as the saying goes, and he had a neat little hole in the middle of his forehead. His name, which, it was printed on the front page of the *Zenith Star* the next morning, was True Blood Country Man. I did not know him, but that is a beautiful name, and now I have memorialized him. It is good to be memorialized, in my opinion, whoever you are. Now I have memorialized several.

I left the category of virgins that winter, and good riddance. I do not suppose any of it was unusual, but it felt unusual. When I was on top of that girl, I changed in to an ape or gorilla of some kind. Then, in to a snake of some kind. Then, in to one of those trilobites that I told of them in Chapter 2. After that I was a trilobite, then I was a diamond. Then a plain stone in the earth. When it was done, I was a human. I have remained one ever since.

My environs at the time was an office I had on the third floor of a place called Vincent Price Hall. Usually, I only talked to other university type people in that building. Such as, Mister Vladimir Alekhine, a tiny man with a square head and white hair all most down to his eye brows, which, they were black. He was a janitor, and he used to have an uncle who was a future world champion of the game of chess. Then, that uncle was indeed the world champion of chess a while. After that, he was a former world champion of chess. Later on, he was not Mister Vladimir Alekhine's uncle any more, for this reason. He was not any thing any more. Mister Vladimir Alekhine did not talk to me about chess. He did not play chess. He did not know the rules for chess. He stood next

to my steel desk with a trash pail in his hand in the middle of the night, which, that was the time of day I liked to work in that office. Mister Vladimir Alekhine talked to me about World War Two. He said he was a turret gunner in a bomber air plane, and one night they flew a mission over Germany, and he went up to the cock pit to say some thing to the co-pilot. Only, he could not speak to that co-pilot, for there was an ak ak hole in the wind shield and the wind through it was roaring like a hurricane. The co-pilot's head was not there and his neck was just a fountain. Mister Vladimir Alekhine said, lucky for him that it was only a co-pilot. Ha ha.

My cousin, Detective Willy Wilson, came to see me in that office in the year 1977. It is odd to see a person from one of your past environs show up in your present environs. He came there big as life and shook my hand.

"See, I told you that you was a teacher," he said. I would have liked to say, I all ready knew I was a teacher. I did not say it.

"Whut you want?" I said in stead.

"Whut's this place anyway?" Detective Willy Wilson said.

"Teaching place," I said. He patted my head. I hate that.

"Good for you," he said. He seemed to be in no great hurry to tell me what he was here for, so I thought I would just wait for what he had to say. So, I did. He looked at the other desks, which, they were empty, as was usual on a Sunday after noon. It was all so usual on a Sunday fore noon. He looked out the window. We had one big blue sky scraper. I have heard there are more of them now.

"Where's everybody?" he said.

"Sunday," I said.

"Tell me some news," he said. I rolled my shoulders. "Whut you do all day?" he said. I rolled them an other time. He came up very close to let me smell him and he said, "You ever think 'bout whut you did?" I rolled my shoulders. His smell was anchovies smell and flesh smell. May be that he came straight from the air port with out a shower. The anchovies, I recognized. Mamma D's on Fourteenth Street in Dinky Town, next the campus. Detective Willy Wilson stood back. He said, "You look at Gum news up here? Or you too good for us."

"I ain't good," I said.

He said, "No, you ain't."

I said, "Lisseneyere. Whut is it?"

"Hear 'bout Lula?" he said.

"Hear whut?" I said.

He said, "She my boss now. Mayor. How about that?"

"She just wrote me from Jalalabad," I said.

"Where's that?" he said.

I said, "It is in the land of Afghanistan."

He said, "Where is that land?"

"World of Asia," I said. Then I said, "So you lying to me. Why you lie like that?"

"It no lie, cuz," my cousin said.

I said, "She two places at once't?"

He said, "Well she was gone quite a while and she just came back. When she write you?"

"December," I said, which, the month was March that I was talking to Detective Willy Wilson.

He said, "She came back arter Christmas, you know. Get up some petition for a special recall election, and seems evvabody in Gum signed that thing."

"Whut do you know," I said.

"Like she put a spell over 'em," he said.

I said, "My my."

He said, "She went up agens Mayor Cheese and beat him handily." Mayor Cheese is a person, who, he was an unbeatable mayor of Gum in those days, for this reason. If you tried to beat him, then, his boys would come to your place, and they would beat you first.

I said, "I s'wan."

"Juslike magic or sumthin' of the kind," my cousin said.

I said, "Huh."

"You know whut she did for a campaign?" he said.

"Lemee have it," I said.

He said, "Tap dance exhibitions. Sequined leotard and a top hat and a lot a leg. Conjured rabbits from the hat. Those rabbits, they was defected monsters. And, she spent no money. Made some, infack. Now thassa trick."

I said, "How you know?"

"My job to know things," he said, and he sent me one of his winks.

"Whut defects?" I said.

He said, "Horns," and he wagged his index fingers behind his ears.

I said, "Prestidigitation."

"Thassit," he said.

"You tell a nice story," I said.

Detective Willy Wilson looked down cast. Then he brightened a bit and said, "Here more news. Alistair, he got his self convicted. She did nought to help him. I trow, didn't want to. Whut you think a that?" I moved my head side to side. He put his palms on my desk and his face in to my face an other time. "Come on. I take myself all the way here just to get a rise out of you, and you not play? For goodness sake," he said.

"Whut they go do to him?" I said.

"Who?" he said with his eyes wide, just as if he did not know whom I was talking about.

I said, "Reverend Alistair."

Back he stood. "Thass more like it, cuz. Lissen now. Him or you."

"Whut they will do?" I said.

"You know whut," he said.

I said, "No way."

"Way," he said.

I said, "A innocent man."

He said, "No man innocent this fallen world," and he clasped his hands, and he rolled his eyes to Heaven.

"You a card," I said.

"Him or you," he said.

I said, "All right." It is how I got here.

Chapter 70

Golden bird.

Mister Maxwell Mentiroso gave me news. Some one blackened the name of Miss Lula. She was fired from the Congress. She was burned in Gum Central Square out side the Temple of Justice for murder and sorcery, in particular, for raising the dead. Whom did she summon, I wonder. I wonder, was it Miss Isabel. Who else. So it must have been. So it was, I trow. I wonder, when she was raised, did Miss Isabel say any thing. Did she say ought of my self, I wonder. Did Miss Lula ask her to forgive us and to cleanse us.

I have been looking out the chicken wire, to the razor wire, to the guard posts up on their trestles, and out past, to the wastes that go out from there, all the way to the north pole. The sky is white, and the sun is just a pale white coin in the middle of it. Behind that white, the sun burns gold. The true black sky behind the white is a starry crown. The well known pillars of creation are there. Each of those pillars is as big as a god, and the gods are bigger than I can imagine. So, I can not imagine them. Gods come in all shapes, not only pillars, as I imagine. They come like birds and horses, which, the stars are born in their eyes and the number less worlds spin in them for ever and ever. All the people I love are there. All the people who are there I love. For an example, Miss Lula is there. Soon, I will be there my self. I think of it, and I am happy.

The *Confessions* of Willy Wilson

An Afterword by Robin Goodfellow MD, PhD

For several reasons, *My Confessions* (hereafter, *MC*) by Willy Wilson (1950 – 2019) is a privileged but dubious text of the narrative form known variously as *confession*, *memoir*, or, more particularly, *confessional memoir*. A minor one is that Wilson was the author of dubious scientific papers – so many of them, in fact, that they have yet to be completely catalogued. An annotated bibliography by the present writer (hereafter, *TPW*) is in progress under N.S.F. grant US-2009-23AU6. Most of Wilson's *arcana* were found concealed in his workplace, the kitchen of the Minimum Security Federal Prison Camp, Arctica, after his removal to Amazon for the execution of his sentence in 2019. The manuscript of *MC* itself, penciled in a childish hand on the backs of eight hundred thirteen tattered and befouled soup can labels, was found buried in parts under several outhouses on the grounds of the prison. Sharp tools, such as those which would have been necessary to break the frozen soil in that place – even such as pencils – are not allowed in the hands of inmates; how Wilson managed to procure such instruments is an intriguing question that has been the subject of several monographs in the field of Lula Smith Studies. Speculation that the soil had become easier to dig because of so-called global warming is easily dismissed, *contra* Wilson's remarks on that subject, by perusal of any one of several government publications establishing (inaccurate contemporary temperature readings notwithstanding) that there was no such phenomenon operating at the time.¹ It seems to be fortuitous, merely, that several other prison narratives buried under the same outhouses were discovered after the Earth's ice caps melted completely due to undetermined causes in the year 2039.

Little – possibly, none – of Wilson's scientific work has been published in a refereed journal.² *TPW* has endeavored to submit some of it to the review of specialists in the field of the theory of elliptic curves, since that is how Mr. Wilson describes the subject of his investigations in the body of his memoir. Unfortunately, the reactions of the experts consulted by *TPW* have been uniformly disparaging. Among the descriptors employed by specialists to characterize the documents submitted by *TPW* for their inspection, it seems fair to him to mention such terms as *incoherent*, *inane* and *wrong* as representative.³ Apparently, we have before us the case of a narrator of singular interest, yet one having no abilities at all pertinent to his supposed profession. Indeed, a careful reader of the present work will discern hints of an intellect compromised, not merely within the circle of its scientific interests, but outside it as well. For this reason, among others, the purely literary value of *MC* is, to say the least, open to question. As is well-known, the merits of his book have been widely debated ever since its appearance on the World Wide Web at the time of the trial of his partner in crime, the Amazon entrepreneur and politician, former U.S. Senator Lula Smith (1955-2019). *TPW* was asked to prepare the present edition by the Chair of the Ethics Committee of the United States Senate and by the Librarian of Congress simply as a matter of preservation of the historical record, not as an endorsement of its artistic qualities or of any of the factual claims made by Willy Wilson as they are represented herein.

A second reason for the widespread interest in *MC* is, of course, its role in one of the most sensational trials in the political history of the United States. When sections of it first appeared on the GuvLeaks web site in 2016, it was not even clear that a crime had occurred. At

¹ e.g., Documents NSF 109998-2017, DoD 8889-988-2023

² But see 1976 Gum City Conference on Dynamical Systems Attached to Elliptic Curves, *Proceedings, Volume 5, Uninvited Addresses*. Only one such address ("Why this is interesting", pp. 1011-1013) is, in fact, included in volume 5. Its author is anonymous and our investigations have not uncovered any attendee who remembers hearing it. The fact that it has itself been described by our expert correspondents as inane, etc. (see footnote 3), points in Wilson's direction, however.

³ See footnote 2.

that time, the only existing evidence to this effect was Wilson's testimony in the course of his brief trial nearly thirty years earlier (Wilson having pleaded guilty to capital crimes and renounced his jury rights—possible in this country only in the Commonwealth of Amazon.) *MC*'s initial effect on American politics was simply to cause Gum City authorities once again to search for, and, at last, to discover, the victim's remains, preserved fortuitously by the hypoxic conditions at the bottom of (the ironically named) Dammed Lake. The slow drum beat of revelations, even as Wilson, immured in his prison cell far to the north and ignorant of his growing infamy, was completing his memoir, impelled members of her own party to bring Senator Smith before the Committee, where she made her own startling revelations, not only admitting to her part in the murder, but to other, less natural, crimes, and drawing the entire political establishment of Amazon Commonwealth into scandal and disrepute. Then, upon her conviction, she was not put to the sword, which was the usual punishment in Amazon for non-treason capital crimes, and the sad fate of our author. (In the Commonwealth, traitors are hanged.) Instead, she was subjected to an *auto-da-fé*—an unusual event, even in that benighted state, requiring, by the House of Burgesses, an Act of Temporary Secession in order to permit suspension of the religion and punishment clauses of the federal Constitution as amended. For obvious reasons, these measures remain controversial in legal circles, even though a modern method of ignition⁴ is employed, typically, to minimize the sufferings of the miscreant.

The third and fourth reasons for our interest in *MC* are the fierce arguments about its authenticity and veracity. Partisans of ex-Senator Smith sought to attribute authorship of the manuscript to Wilson's Arctica cellmate, Maxwell Mentiroso. It is true that Wilson continued, until his sentence was carried out, to deny that he was its author. It is also true that Mr. Mentiroso's life sentence was commuted in 2019 to time served. But there is no credible evidence to support the accusations of misconduct against the then president (who happens to belong to a political party other than Senator Smith's) the Justice Department, and Mr. Mentiroso. As to the fourth reason, we have the fine psychological portrait of Wilson, not in his own book, but in Mr. Mentiroso's best-selling memoir, *I Met the Devil* (Vengeance Press, 2020). It is fascinating to compare and contrast the relatively benign Willy Wilson of *MC* with the much more revealing version of our author that stalks the pages of Mr. Mentiroso's account. Wilson's profanity, rage and violence as depicted in that masterful remembrance go far to explain the actions that left a young woman dead and her young child an orphan. Indeed, it is rather surprising that his earliest readers could have been seduced by the bleak moral landscape opened to our view by the implicit proposal of Wilson's *MC*: that evil can result instead from dull wits and naïveté, and even from innocence.

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⁴ Blast furnace.

